From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Arthur Conquest via groups.io <awcIII=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM; Brookline PAX
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Courtesy Follow-Up
Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 12:43:04 AM

I'd like to bring TMMs up to date regarding the incident that occurred on the floor just after Town Meeting adjourned last Wednesday v. Bob Weintraub (P9).

Bob responded to my initial email by disputing my version of the incident but also apologized for his behavior. I responded and challenged Bob to give me his version which was insignificant to my initial description of what occurred. He also said he was uncomfortable "litigating" the incident in public (over the TMMA and PAX listservs that is).

In a 3rd email he asked if we could meet in person (over coffee or a beer or a meal) and discuss our differences. I have agreed.

I suggested we take a stroll around Brookline Reservoir, which is scheduled to occur Wednesday AM!

I wanted to make TMMs aware that the incident didn't just evaporate with the two emails between us, which you were cc'd on. I'm moving forward.

Truth/Justice,

AWCIII

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Article 30 signing up to speak, etc.
Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 2:24:08 PM

Dear TMM's: As I think you know I will be moderating the debate on Article 30. This probably won't be reached until Thursday although there is a possibility it will be reached tommorow. As both Neil Wishinsky and Sandy Gadsby have recused themselves, that means I will also be making all procedural rulings on the Article. So, if you want to speak or have a procedural question on this Article, you should contact me. I do my best to respond to emails sent to any of my email addresses, including this one, but the best one to use for signing up to speak is tmmsignup@gmail.com as that is solely dedicated to TM sign ups so your request won't run the risk of getting lost in other traffic. Also, as of today, two substitute motions, one from the Advisory Committee and one from TMM Lee Biernbaum, in addition to the motion to refer submitted by the Petitioner, has been submitted. So, I suggest you pay attention to the supplements to the Combined Reports. Finally, and most importantly for anyone speaking on this article be aware that I do not believe this article is the proper vehicle for a debate about the merits of Town versus a city form of government. The article concerns whether further study by a new committee of those issues is warranted. Yours truly will intervene if I believe a speaker is unduly straying off topic. Thanks for listening and I am available to answer questions. See you tommorow. Jon Karon TMM 12 and Assistant Town Moderator.

Jonathan A. Karon
Karon Law, LLC
10 High Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 405-3200
jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Elizabeth Kernan via groups.io <ekernan08=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] BCW Support for WA29
Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 3:23:53 PM
Attachments: Article 29 BCW Statement.docx

June 3, 2025

To Brookline Town Meeting Members:

The Brookline Commission for Women (BCW) reviews the Warrant to consider whether to make a recommendation to Town Meeting on any of the filed articles. Articles that rise to the level of BCW review must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1) The article speaks directly to a gender justice/equity issue for women/girls (or a significant segment of women/girls) in Brookline, or at the state or national level;
2) The outcome of Town Meeting's vote on the article may indirectly or inadvertently impact (positively or negatively) a significant segment of women/girls in Brookline, and we want to make that impact clear;
3) The article speaks to rules, processes, or procedures that will affect the conduct, rules, structure, or obligations of the BCW as a public commission.

The BCW held a public hearing on May 7, 2025, to consider one article in the Warrant for the May Town Meeting: **Article 29**, a resolution to declare the Town of Brookline a sanctuary town and a place of safety for transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse people.

BCW Recommendation: **Favorable Action** *(unanimous vote)*

The Brookline Commission for Women (BCW) stands in support of Warrant Article 29, which seeks to declare Brookline a Town of Safety and Protection for Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender Diverse People.

As you may know, the mission of the Brookline Commission for Women is to promote equity and justice for all women and girls, including all who identify as female.

Our core values include, among others, gender justice in that we specifically reject transphobia, and we engage in work to create a world free from discrimination. We advocate on behalf of all women and girls (as defined above) to ensure safety and equal treatment, voice, and participation in Brookline. We support all women and girls who are struggling and who strive for a better life. We celebrate the strength, contributions, and diversity of all women and girls.

Warrant Article 29 is a crucial step towards creating a Brookline where everyone feels safe, respected, and valued. By affirming our commitment to the safety and protection of transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse people, we are not only protecting their rights but also enriching our entire community.

The Brookline Commission for Women would therefore request that you vote favorably on this Warrant Article.

Sincerely,

Liz Stillman, *Chair*
Aileen Lee, *Vice Chair*
Julia Khazan, *co-Secretary*
Prashanthi Sylada, *co-Secretary*
Shideh Amirifelli
Carol Caro
Lucy Chie
Meenakshi Garodia
Franceska Gjorga
Elizabeth Kernan
Cynthia Levay-Arnfield
Hadassah Margolis

Elizabeth Kernan
TMM Pct 10
Brookline Commission For Women

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

BROOKLINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Liz Stillman, *Chair*
Aileen Lee, *Vice Chair*
Julia Khazan, *co-Secretary*
Prashanthi Sylada, *co-Secretary*
Shideh Amirifelli
Carol Caro
Lucy Chie
Meenakshi Garodia
Franceska Gjorga
Elizabeth Kernan
Cynthia Levay-Arnfield
Hadassah Margolis

May 27, 2025

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Harris via groups.io <citizenjohn02446=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	TMMA ListServ
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] Fw: BHS Climate and Food Justice Club Endorses WAs 16, 18, 19, 20 and 25! Read All About It!
Date:	Tuesday, June 3, 2025 7:31:59 PM
Attachments:	Spring 2025 CFJC Endorsements (1).pdf

My Fellow Town Meeting Members:

The Brookline High School Climate and Food Justice Club very enthusiastically endorses

Warrant Article 16: Bike Parking
Warrant Articles 18 & 19: Plastics
Warrant Article 20: Ban of Foie Gras
Warrant Article 25: Climate Change Superfund Resolution

They asked me to forward their endorsement letter on to you. You'll find it below, in PDF.

John Harris
TMM 8
and Lead Petitioner: WA 25 Climate Change Superfund Resolution (Many thanks to the Climate and Food Justice Club for its endorsement of the Resolution!)

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Tobias Sillman <25sillmant@brooklinek12.org>
To: John Harris <citizenjohn02446@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 06:30:30 PM EDT
Subject: Re: Plans for Town Meeting!

Hi John,

I'm thrilled to report that the BHS Climate and Food Justice Club is supporting five warrant articles at Town Meeting this week! We've written our endorsements and explanations in a five-page document, attached here as a PDF. We plan to send everything to the TMMs and speak in favor of several in person.

If you could forward this (updated) letter to the TMMs, our club would greatly appreciate it!

Thanks so much,
Toby

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Dear Town Meeting Members:

We, the members of the Brookline High School Climate and Food Justice Club, hereby endorse the following Warrant Articles for the spring 2025 Brookline Town Meeting:

A. Article 16 - bicycle parking rezoning, submitted by Anthony Ishak
B. Article 18/19 - bans on plastic utensils and bags, submitted by Brenda Hochberg et al.
C. Article 20 - ban on foie gras, submitted by Ezra Kleinbaum et al. (passed!)
D. Article 25 - Make Polluters Pay resolution, submitted by John Harris et al.

Our club advocates for sustainable food, energy, transportation, housing, and education. We have been engaged with Town government for years in pursuing our goals in these areas. We have taught lessons on climate change, served on the School Committee's Climate and Sustainability Task Force, organized "bike bus" rides to school, conducted petition drives for safer bicycle infrastructure, enacted a successful composting program at the high school, organized a climate forum for School Committee candidates this past April, and more. We have also been very engaged with Town Meeting; we have supported several warrant articles in the past, including by spearheading the passage of Warrant Article 41 of spring 2023, which involved a year-long process to garner support for an affordable housing overlay.

We support these articles (16, 18, 19, 20, and 25) because they are fully consistent with our mission of supporting sustainable food, housing, transportation, and more. Please consider our reasoning for supporting these articles, as outlined on the following pages.

Sincerely,

The members of the BHS Climate and Food Justice Club

Student leaders:
Toby Sillman '25, Member, Brookline Bicycle Advisory Committee (P5)
Marco Neer '26, Editor-in-Chief, *The Cypress* (P1)
Audrey Chang '26 (P16)
Amirah Saalik SWS '25 (P12)
Tia Percheva '25 (P9)
Layla Noubir SWS '25 (P17)
Marina Turchin SWS '26 (P16)

Advisors:
Eric Colburn '87, BHS English Teacher
Roger Grande, BHS Social Studies Teacher

A. Warrant Article 16 - bicycle parking rezoning

For tens of thousands of current and future residents of Brookline, bicycling plays a crucial role in serving people's commuting needs. According to research conducted from 2017-2021, 28 percent of Brookline residents do not own a car, highlighting the sheer necessity of bicycling for these residents. Encouraging bicycling is also in the interest of the Town's climate goals, which boldly proclaim a goal of net-zero emissions by 2040. Automobile emissions account for a plurality (42 percent) of greenhouse gas emissions statewide. Therefore, a reduction in vehicle miles travelled is arguably the most effective way to slash emissions.

By implementing parking in residential areas, it is a means of encouraging cycling as a primary mode of transportation, aiding the town's goal of net-zero emissions. Providing accessible and secure parking for bikes increases the likelihood of residents to choose biking for their daily commutes, errands, and leisure activities, as well as eliminating barriers such as storage concerns, and theft risk. As bike usage increases throughout the Town, accessible and reliable bike parking promotes the Town's message to reduce carbon emissions and will promote a healthier Brookline. Prioritizing bike parking aligns with long-term environmental goals, helping the Town to promote active lifestyles while also promoting sustainable transportation.

As existing zoning requirements mandate that all new development guarantee car parking, our club supports this article because we believe it will lessen the gap between the amount of car parking versus the amount of bike parking available currently. As opposed to cars, bikes take up a significantly less amount of space in a given area, as such, an area can accommodate more bikes than it can cars. It would encourage residents to transition into biking more, reducing car dependency, and lowering emissions which will create a smaller carbon footprint for the Town. It will foster a healthier, and safer Brookline. We endorse Warrant Article 16 for the numerous advantages it will bring to Brookline, setting the Town as a role model and leader in promoting sustainable and safe transportation, and commend Anthony Ishak for playing a leading role in advancing more sustainable modes of transportation and housing.

B. Warrant Articles 18/19 - single-use plastics

The everyday use of plastic foodware has led to a pandemic of microplastics in our bodies. The accumulation of these microplastics are causing a detrimental impact for our health. We must be careful as there's not a lot of research on the impacts of having microplastics in our body, and it's nearly impossible to remove the micro plastics from within. Furthermore, studies have shown that microplastics in the body result in an increase of oxidation damage, which occurs when oxygen reactive species cause cell damage, and is a known contributor to cancer.

The impact from plastic waste on the environment has been exhaustively researched and documented. In marine wildlife, microplastics have the ability to severely damage their ecosystem. It has the ability to alter phytoplankton populations, a keystone species in the ocean. Harm to them means harm to the rest of the ecosystem, which can create a chain reaction of damage to greater ecosystems. Microplastics can also affect soil properties and pollute water systems. They cause changes in soil pH levels, aeration, porosity, and biota, all of which negatively influence the ecosystem and wildlife.

Last summer, Sasha Palmer, PSB Director of Food Services, said in an interview that a transition from disposables to reusables in school cafeterias would save the Food Services department hundreds of thousands of dollars, contributing to financial and environmental sustainability. This same mindset must be applied to Brookline's small businesses, since a transition away from single-use plastics benefits business owners, their customers, and our climate. We are thankful that the Brookline business community shares our view, as evidenced by last month's endorsement of both articles by the Small Business Development Committee. In supporting smart business practices, environmental sustainability, and human health, we must prohibit single use plastics, and pass Warrant Articles 18 and 19.



D. Warrant Article 25 - Resolution Supporting Climate Superfund

Climate Action Brookline (CAB) Co-President John Harris and other climate allies of ours recently asked for our support of this article, which, if passed, urges the state to establish a climate change superfund. We share CAB's belief that the largest contributors to state emissions should be held accountable for their adverse impacts on the environment and public health.

For centuries, the development, deployment, and maintenance of fossil fuel infrastructure has caused drastic harm to the environment, the global economy, political stability, and public health. Climate change has been perpetuated by a grotesque level of political and industrial irresponsibility, as powerful fossil fuel interests wage war on our planet and its people. The cost to ordinary taxpayers is extremely high: as recently as 2022, U.S. fossil fuel subsidies reached a staggering $757 billion. $3 billion of this came from direct ("impact") subsidies, whereas the remaining $754 billion came from "implicit" subsidies (in healthcare costs, environmental degradation, and more).

Fortunately, there is a simple solution. The answer is making the leading contributors to climate change pay for the centuries of harm they have caused, as called for in Warrant Article 25. If passed, this article would sign the Town on to an increasingly relevant statewide initiative known as "Make Polluters Pay." This would counteract centuries of fiscal irresponsibility and force the state's leading polluters, rather than taxpayers, to pay for their environmental havoc. This money would be used to recoup the losses the fossil fuel industry has wrought to our communities, our resources, and our climate. We commend John Harris and his co-petitioners for this visionary step towards addressing the climate crisis and the inequity it has caused, and eagerly endorse Warrant Article 25.

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynn-Jones, Sean via groups.io <Sean_Lynn-Jones=hks.harvard.edu@groups.io>
To:	citizenjohn02446@yahoo.com; TMMA ListServ
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Fw: BHS Climate and Food Justice Club Endorses WAs 16, 18, 19, 20 and 25! Read All About It!
Date:	Wednesday, June 4, 2025 12:39:41 PM
Attachments:	BGSAWarrantArticleRecommendations.May2025.pdf

Dear Colleagues,
I am delighted to see the BHS Climate and Food Justice Club getting involved and endorsing warrant articles. Thanks to John Harris for circulating their recommendations.
Please remember that the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance (BGSA) also endorses Articles 18, 19, and 25. With any luck, Town Meeting will vote on all three tonight (or on Thursday, at the latest) and they will be approved by large majorities. The BGSA recommendations are attached, along with an invitation to all TMMs to attend the BGSA's Summer Solstice Celebration on June 20 in Fisher Hill Reservoir Park. (R.s.v.p.: info@brooklinegreenspace.org)
The BGSA did not take a vote on whether to endorse Article 16, but I plan to vote Favorable Action on it tonight.
Best,
Sean Lynn-Jones
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, and
President, Brookline GreenSpace Alliance

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** John Harris via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 7:31 PM
To: TMMA ListServ <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Fw: BHS Climate and Food Justice Club Endorses WAs 16, 18, 19, 20 and 25! Read All About It!

My Fellow Town Meeting Members:

The Brookline High School Climate and Food Justice Club very enthusiastically endorses

Warrant Article 16: Bike Parking
Warrant Articles 18 & 19: Plastics
Warrant Article 20: Ban of Foie Gras
Warrant Article 25: Climate Change Superfund Resolution

They asked me to forward their endorsement letter on to you. You'll find it below, in

PDF.

John Harris
TMM 8
and Lead Petitioner: WA 25 Climate Change Superfund Resolution (Many thanks to the Climate and Food Justice Club for its endorsement of the Resolution!)

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To: John Harris <citizenjohn02446@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 06:30:30 PM EDT
Subject: Re: Plans for Town Meeting!

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If you could forward this (updated) letter to the TMMs, our club would greatly appreciate it!

Thanks so much,
Toby

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BROOKLINE GREENSPACE ALLIANCE WARRANT ARTICLE RECOMMENDATIONS
MAY 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Brookline GreenSpace Alliance (BGSA) offers the following recommendations on Warrant Articles relevant to parks, open space, and protecting the environment.

ARTICLE 10 (Community Preservation Act FY26 Appropriations) This warrant article appropriates Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for many important Open Space and Recreation projects, including the outdoor skating rink at Larz Anderson Park, the boardwalk in Amory Woods, trails in Putterham Woods, a tree inventory, and the Ridley and Coolidge Playground tennis courts. It would fund efforts to remove invasive species at Hall's Pond, the D. Blakely Hoar Sanctuary, and Riverway Park. It also includes funds for design of a much-needed additional community garden. Several of the Preservation projects also will restore or improve historic structures in Brookline's green spaces such as the Minot Rose Garden and the Old Burying Ground. The BGSA thanks Brookline's CPA Committee for their work and recommends Favorable Action.

ARTICLE 18 (Reduce demand for single-use plastic food packaging) This article amends the Town bylaws to reduce the amount of nonrecyclable, nonbiodegradable, and noncompostable material provided by food establishments. The overall result would be to reduce the amount of plastic in the environment. The BGSA recommends Favorable Action.

ARTICLE 19 (Regulation of Plastic Bags) This article amends the Town bylaws to extend and enhance Brookline's existing ban on the provision of plastic bags by commercial establishments. The BGSA recommends Favorable Action.

ARTICLE 25 (Resolution in Support of a Climate Change Superfund) This resolution urges the state legislature to pass legislation that would "make the polluter pay" for climate change adaptation projects. The BGSA recommends Favorable Action.

The BGSA invites Town Meeting members to participate in upcoming events in Brookline's parks and open spaces, including our annual Summer Solstice Celebration in Fisher Hill Reservoir Park, Friday, June 20, 7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.
For more information on the Solstice Celebration and other events, see the calendar posted on the BGSA website: https://www.brooklinegreenspace.org/

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: awcIII@yahoo.com
Cc: Brookline TM; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Courtesy Follow-Up
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 12:55:51 PM

Hi Arthur. I never got your recent email to the community. It went into my "junk." Don't know why.
So we just spent a couple of hours at the Brookline Reservoir. I'm feeling very good about our conversation and stroll around the reservoir. We'll do it again soon.
Bob

> On Jun 3, 2025, at 12:43 AM, Arthur Conquest via groups.io <awcIII=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I'd like to bring TMMs up to date regarding the incident that occurred on the floor just after Town Meeting adjourned last Wednesday v. Bob Weintraub (P9).
>
> Bob responded to my initial email by disputing my version of the incident but also apologized for his behavior. I responded and challenged Bob to give me his version which was insignificant to my initial description of what occurred. He also said he was uncomfortable "litigating" the incident in public (over the TMMA and PAX listservs that is).
>
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>
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>
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>
> Truth/Justice,
>
> AWCIII

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To:	BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Cc:	PAXBoardMembers@groups.io; 0-Marty-gmail 0-Rosenthal; Brookline PAXmembers; "Joslin Murphy"; neil@nrgordon.com
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] WA30 mas [PAX WA9 & WA30 addenda Recommendations
Date:	Wednesday, June 4, 2025 3:54:30 PM
Attachments:	WA18 Charter [155-58] create Mcfg (& MbtaCA] ["23 STM .xlsx.pdf Andover] Form of Government Forum Presentation (December 2020-January 2021).pdf Andover] TGSC Final Report (12-10-2021)[mr notes.pdf image001.png
Importance:	High

1st, please be aware that I'll take an educated risk that WA30 won't be until tomorrow; and due to my (aging, but thankfully not fatal) health/walking issues (neuropathy & stenosis), I'm regretfully doing most of TMtgs on Zoom, but planning to revisit the auditorium tomorrow – but not twice. So, if 30's reached tonight, please forgive my speech by Zoom.

2nd, More importantly here's **yet mas WA30 TMI** re this huge, "existential" issue, to which I or JOSLIN MURPHY *may* allude in our speeches, the latter (intertwined) two that she discovered recently, in our opinions an opposite exemplar of our MCFG's approach/methodology:

- WA18 Charter Rollcall [155-58] to create Mcfg (& MbtaCA] ['23 STM .xlsx.pdf
- **Andover]** TGSC Final Report (12-10-2021)[mr notes.pdf… incorporating …
- … Andover] Form of Government Forum Presentation

"C" U tonight,

Marty Rosenthal, Tmm-9
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

EARLIER MESSAGES

> **From:** Martin Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com>
> **Sent:** Tuesday, May 27, 2025 3:49 PM
> **To:** BrooklineTMMA@groups.io (BrooklineTMMA@groups.io) <BrooklineTMMA@groups.io>; Brookline PAXmembers (BrooklinePAX@groups.io) <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
> **Cc:** PAXBoardMembers@groups.io; 0-Marty-gmail 0-Rosenthal (martyros0637@gmail.com) <martyros0637@gmail.com>
> **Subject:** PAX WA9 & WA30 addenda Recommendations

Importance: High

Hi, all. As often slow and always aspirationally sure, here's more from PAX re (tonight's) WA9 & (next week) WA30, hot off today's press being only the:
ADDENDUM TO (the below) **PAX WA RECOMMENDATIONS**

C U tonight, I by remote except a beforehand Pct. 9 caucus, and then next week WA30. Let our (Fabulous] Form of Govnt roll (see **PAX & Gov. Dukakis** in **WA30's Appendix A**, and **Sandy Gadsby & David-Marc Goldstein** in MCFG final Report**S,** WA31 (lacking page numbers, and only as of today computer pp. 615-617)

Marty Rosenthal
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110;
martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE (emphasis now added)

From: BrooklinePAX@groups.io <BrooklinePAX@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Neil Gordon via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, May 25, 2025 11:37 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Subject: [BrooklinePAX] Brookline PAX Warrant Article Recommendations

Brookline PAX
think globally • act locally

Warrant Article Recommendations

May 27, 2025 Annual Town Meeting

We again congratulate our newly elected or re-elected Town Meeting Members, and welcome all 263 Town Meeting Members to our important, upcoming annual gathering.

The attached recommendations are as voted by at least a 60% supermajority of PAX Board Members voting at our recent Warrant Article endorsement

meeting. We've done our best to opine on the latest available versions of Articles and amendments, but recommend you pay particular attention to Combined Reports supplements for late breaking changes we were unable to anticipate.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Co-chair with Marty Rosenthal of Brookline PAX
Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

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LAST UPDATE: 5:00pm on 11/17/23

Special Town Meeting Night 1 November 14, 2023

Precinct	Name	STM2 Article 1 Main Motion FY2024 Budget Amendment	STM4 Article 1 Motion to Terminate Debate	STM4 Article 1 Motion to Refer	STM4 Article 1 Main Motion MBTA Communities Act – Consensus Article	Article 18 Motion to Terminate Debate	Article 18 Main Motion Resolution on creating a Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government
1	Albuquerque, Ana	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
1	Albuquerque, Rui	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
1	Cavell, Cathleen	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
1	Daley, Susan	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
1	Ericsson, Sarah	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
1	Evenson, Amy	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
1	Gordon, Neil	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
1	Hillman, Carol	YES	NO	NO	YES		
1	Ingraham, Katherine	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
1	Ishak, Anthony	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
1	King, Louise	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	ABSTAIN
1	Lynn-Jones, Sean	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
1	Moghtader, Sarah	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
1	Neuefeind, Bettina	YES	NO	YES		YES	YES
1	Terrell, Charles	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
2	Dickinson, Paul	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Franco, James	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Gladstone, Carol	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
2	Hochberg, Brenda	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Jones, Chanda						
2	Miller, Robert	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
2	Penzel, Markus	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Richardson, Kimberley	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
2	Roberts, Pamela	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
2	Scotto, Barbara	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Snyder, Richard	YES		NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Soiffer, Ariel		NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Tamayo, Carlos		YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Toomey, Maura	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
2	Trevvett, David	YES	ABSTAIN	NO	YES	NO	YES
3	Becker, Kathryn	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Benson, Jeffrey	YES	YES	NO	YES		
3	Bohrs, Harry	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Dewart, Mary	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Dewart, Murray	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Doughty, Dennis	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Gilman, Jane	YES	YES	NO	YES		
3	Hahn, Gina	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Liautaud, Joanne	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
3	Robinson, Felina	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Scanlon, Kathleen	YES	YES	NO	YES		
3	Steinfield, Frank	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Stone, Rebecca	YES	YES	NO	YES	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN

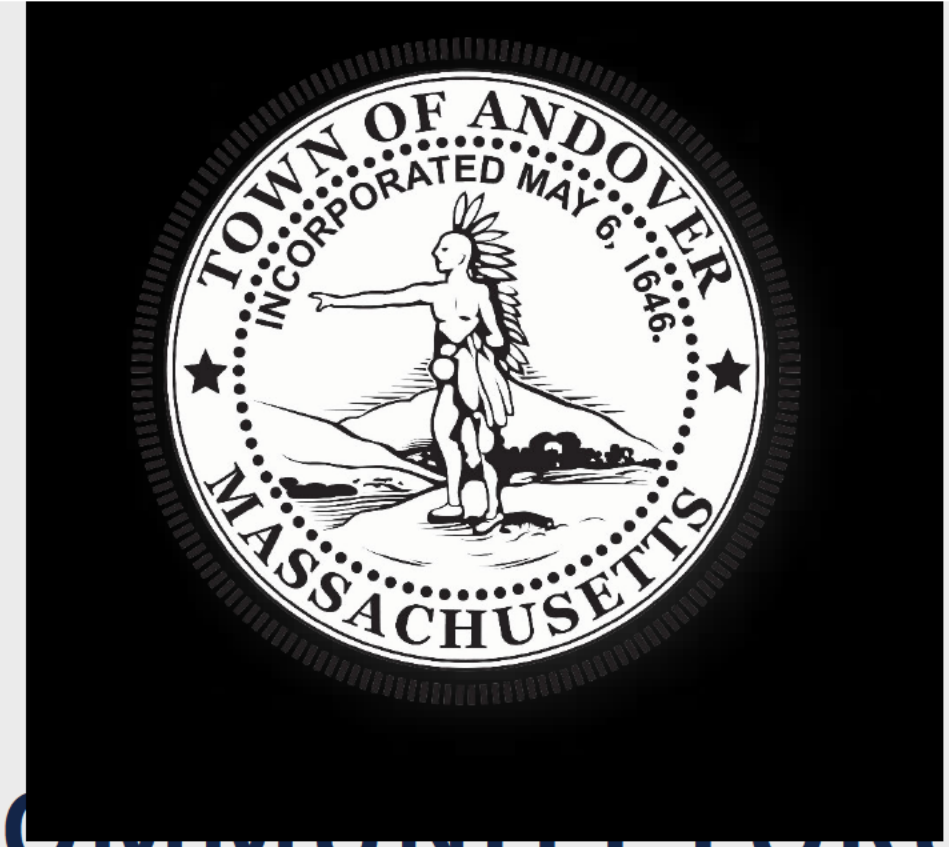
3	Tucker, Nate	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
3	Turner, Anne	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
4	Ambrose, Karen		ABSTAIN	NO	YES	YES	ABSTAIN
4	Ambrose, Thomas	YES	YES	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	YES	YES
4	Childs, Elizabeth	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
4	Christ, Alan	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
4	Daves, Robert	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
4	Dempsey, Christopher		YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
4	Hsieh, Paul	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
4	Hyatt, Matthew	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
4	Linder, Liz	YES	YES	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	YES	YES
4	Machmuller, Wendy	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
4	O'Neal, Shawn						
4	O'Neal, Sr., Donelle	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
4	Priestly, Vena	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
4	Teame, Awet	YES	YES	YES	NO		
4	Yang, Marianna	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
5	Ames, Wendy	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
5	Bastien, Bonnie	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
5	Drake, Cynthia	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
5	England, Kevin	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
5	Flint, Anthony	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
5	Friedman, Wendy	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
5	Glover, Michael	YES	ABSTAIN	NO	YES	YES	YES
5	Grossman, Perry	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
5	Lacy, Keith	YES	YES	NO	YES		
5	Mabrouk, Omar		YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
5	Mattison, Hugh	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
5	O'Leary, Phyllis		YES	NO	YES		
5	Reyelt, William	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
5	Rios, Carlos	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
5	Stahl, Wendy	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
6	Anderson, Catherine	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
6	Bassett, John	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
6	Conquest, III, Arthur	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
6	Correa, Patricia	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
6	Doldron, Malcolm	YES		NO	YES	NO	NO
6	Englander, Scott	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
6	Linos, Natalia	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
6	Otero, Ana	YES					
6	Perlman, Bitsy	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
6	Richmond, Clinton	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
6	Rudolph, Jeffrey	YES		NO	YES	YES	YES
6	Saltzman, Daniel	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
6	Smith, Kim	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
6	Smith, Virginia	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
6	Vogt, Marissa	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
7	Cohen, Susan	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
7	Frey, Ernest	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
7	Granoff, Susan	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
7	Grossman, Simon	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
7	Hardebeck, Kelly	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
7	Hebert, John	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
7	Levy, Mark	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
7	Maher, Patricia	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO

7	Margolis, Jonathan	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
7	Newell, Amy	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
7	Newell, Max	YES	ABSTAIN	NO	YES	NO	NO
7	Stokes, Colin	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
7	Stokes, Jessica	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
7	Wu, Chi Chi	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
7	Zimmerman, Amanda	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
8	Burns, Tracie	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
8	Goldstein, David-Marc	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
8	Goodwin, Carolyn	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
8	Greenwald, Anne	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
8	Harris, John	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
8	Heller, Nancy	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES
8	Homer, Charles		YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
8	Johnson, Anita	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
8	Lebovitz, Alexander	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
8	Perler, Francine	YES	YES	YES	ABSTAIN	YES	YES
8	Reamer, Arden	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
8	Stone, Eric	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	ABSTAIN
8	Toffel, Michael	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
8	Wang, Aone	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
8	Weitzman, Donald	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
9	Biernbaum, Lee	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
9	Eng, Ashley	YES	NO	NO	YES		NO
9	Freedman-Gurspan, Marion	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
9	Graff, Damon					YES	YES
9	Harris, Paul	YES		NO	YES	YES	YES
9	Howards, Susan	YES	YES	YES	ABSTAIN	YES	YES
9	Kitterman, Sarah	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
9	Lepson, Robert	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
9	Loula, Elizabeth	YES		NO	YES		
9	Rosenthal, Martin	YES	ABSTAIN	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	YES
9	Simansky, Harold					NO	YES
9	Swartz, Charles	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
9	Tuckman, Gerald	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
9	Vanderkay, Judith	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
9	Weintraub, Robert	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
10	Abbott, Suzette	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
10	Ananian, C.	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
10	Barenbaum, Rachel	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
10	Bowman, John	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
10	Feldberg, Roslyn	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
10	Florio, Katherine	YES	YES	ABSTAIN	YES	YES	YES
10	Hyett, Eric	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
10	Klafter, David	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
10	Loscalzo, Kimberly	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
10	Maddocks, Ariel	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
10	Maddocks, Christopher	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
10	Sheehan, Conor	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
10	Stephens, Nicole	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
10	Sweitzer, Naomi	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
10	Weaver, Karin	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
11	Fischer, Shira	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
11	Giora-Gorfajn, Shanna			NO	YES	NO	NO
11	Golden, Jonathan	YES		NO	YES	NO	ABSTAIN

11	Gray, Martha	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
11	Hilliard, John	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
11	Kaldy, Zsuzsanna	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
11	Lescohier, David		YES	NO	YES		
11	Lewis, Kenneth	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
11	Lowe, David	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
11	Mautner, Rebecca	YES	YES	NO	YES		
11	Pollak, David	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
11	Rumpler, John	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
11	Shatz, Lisa	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	ABSTAIN
11	Weaver, Anne	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
11	Wholey, Leonard	YES	YES	NO	YES		
12	Abbett, Jonathan	YES	NO	NO	YES		
12	Bignami, Petra	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
12	Bruce, Stephanie	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
12	Burstein, Michael	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
12	Cavanaugh, Nancy	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
12	Cooke-Childs, Lee	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
12	Dolbear, Emily	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
12	Frey, David	YES	YES	NO	YES		
12	Friedman, Harry	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES
12	Hummel, Amy	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
12	Jaret, Mazal						
12	Karon, Jonathan	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
12	Kushner, Michael						
12	Laduzinski, Steven	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
12	Lowenstein, Mark	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
13	Best, Michael	YES	YES	NO	YES		
13	Doggett, John	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
13	Fine, Jonathan	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
13	Fischer, Andrew	YES	YES	NO	YES		
13	Freeman, John						
13	Frias, Valerie	YES		NO	YES		
13	Hoy, Francis	YES	YES	NO	YES		
13	Knott, Laura	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
13	Ladd, Brian	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
13	Lohe, Werner	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
13	Mendels, David	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
13	Rubenstein, Michael	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
13	Saner, Paul	YES	NO	NO	YES		
13	Senecal, Barbara						
13	Veski, Shannon	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
14	Benka, Carla	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
14	Benka, Richard	YES	YES	YES	ABSTAIN	YES	YES
14	Fredkin, Richard		YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
14	Gacioch, David	YES	YES	NO	YES	ABSTAIN	YES
14	Hefter, Jesse	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
14	Lipson, Roger	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
14	Lodish, Pamela	YES	YES	NO	YES		
14	Mittel, Shaari	YES	YES	YES		YES	YES
14	O'Connell, Kathleen	YES	YES	NO	YES		
14	Ridruejo, Carlos	YES	NO	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	YES
14	Roseman, Lynda	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
14	Samih, Youkavet		NO	YES	YES	YES	
14	Schoffmann, Sharon	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES

14	Zelkha, Sami	YES		YES	NO	YES	YES
14	Zelkha, Sassan		NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
15	Berger, Eileen	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
15	Berger, Michael	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
15	Boit, Arisa	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABSTAIN
15	Fisher, Julian						
15	Flanagan, Jane		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
15	Hallowell, Benedicte	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
15	Hatzieleftheriadis, Deborah	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
15	Kahn, Janice	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
15	Knauf, Kristine	YES	YES	YES	YES		
15	Krepchin, Ira	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
15	Nangle, Richard		YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
15	Oge, Wadner	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
15	Pearlman, David	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
15	Rourke, James						
15	Senat-Fleury, Jean	YES	YES	NO	YES		
16	Abner, Deborah	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
16	Baines-Walsh, Laura	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	
16	Bowman, Adrienne	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
16	Chiumenti, Stephen	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
16	da Silva, Danielle		YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
16	Day, David	YES	ABSTAIN	YES	YES	ABSTAIN	YES
16	Frawley, Regina	ABSTAIN	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
16	Gladstone, Scott	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
16	Harrington, Michael	YES	YES	YES	ABSTAIN	YES	YES
16	Jonas, Alisa	YES	YES		YES	YES	YES
16	Leichtner, Judith	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
16	Murphy, Joslin	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
16	Murphy, Richard	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
16	Ryan, Jessica	YES	NO	YES	NO		YES
16	Thall, Carolyn	YES	YES	YES	NO		
17	Baum, Jacqueline	YES	YES	NO	YES		
17	Buono, Anthony	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
17	Davis, Jonathan	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
17	Klein, Jonathan	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
17	Levin, Bruce	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
17	Mariash, Uri		YES	YES	NO		
17	McNally, Rita	YES	YES	NO	YES		
17	Mutty, Christopher	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
17	Park, Susan	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO
17	Pehlke, Linda	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
17	Roberts, Susan	YES	NO	YES	NO		YES
17	Schachter-Kahl, Livia	YES	YES	NO	YES		
17	Schafer, Elizabeth	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
17	Silberberg, Isaac	YES	YES	NO	YES		
17	Zakrzewski, Beata		YES	YES	NO		
AL	Aschkenasy, Miriam	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
AL	Greene, Bernard		YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
AL	Kaufman, Ben	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN
AL	Poverman, Kate	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN	ABSTAIN
AL	Sandman, Michael	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
AL	VanScoyoc, John		YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
AL	Vitolo, Hon. Tommy	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
AL	Warren, Paul	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES

		APPROVED	APPROVED	FAILED	APPROVED	APPROVED	APPROVED
TOTALS	***YES***	**231**	**184**	**59**	**209**	**161**	**155**
	NO	**0**	**50**	**187**	**33**	**54**	**58**
	ABSTAIN	**3**	**8**	**5**	**8**	**7**	**10**



COMMUNITY FORUM

TOWN GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE

January 12, 2021

FORUM TOPICS

1. The Committee's Charter, Approach & Process

2. Form of Government Options for Andover

3. Comparison with Other Communities

4. Data on Andover's Town Meeting

5. The Committee's Working Hypothesis

6. Public Comment and Dialogue

COMMITTEE CHARTER

The Town Governance Study Committee shall be charged with studying, and proposing beneficial amendments to, the town's charter, bylaws, and governing practices as they relate to Andover's form of government and governance.

The committee shall:

- Study the town's form of government and governance.
- Examine models of government in comparable communities.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in Andover's current government, and recommend any amendments to the charter, bylaws, and governing practices so as to improve the town's form of government and governance.
- Facilitate public engagement on, and the public's discussion of, the committee's work.

Upon completion of its work, the committee shall submit to the Town Manager and the Select Board a summary of its findings and any recommended amendments to the charter, bylaws, and governing practices.

Established by Select Board, April 22nd, 2019

COMMITTEE CHARTER

“ ... studying, and proposing beneficial amendments … ”

The Town Governance Study Committee shall be charged with studying, and proposing beneficial amendments to, the town’s charter, bylaws, and governing practices as they relate to Andover’s form of government and governance.

“… town’s charter, bylaws, and governing practices …”

- Examine models of government in comparable communities.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in Andover’s current government, and recommend any amendments to the charter, bylaws, and governing practices
- Facilitate public eng

“ ... shall submit to the Town Manager and the Select Board …
… findings and any recommended amendments”

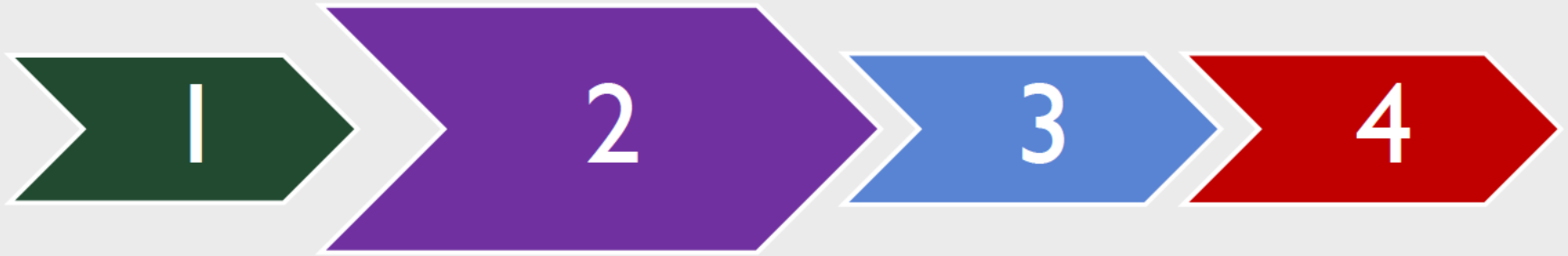
Upon completion of its work
recommended amendments t

THE COMMITTEE'S APPROACH & PROCESS

FOUR PHASES OF COMMITTEE'S WORK

1	2	3	4
Identify Issues to Explore and Sequence for Exploration	**Explore Issues with Public Engagement**	**Make Recommendations**	**Advise Select Board and Town Meeting on Recommendations**
September '19 – January '20	January '20 – Summer '21	Summer & Fall '21	Winter '21 – April '22

PHASE 2: EXPLORE ISSUES



First Focus: Form of Government (including Town Meeting)

- Review UMASS Lowell Resident Survey Results
- Study different government forms (e.g., city vs. town; town council vs. Open Town Meeting vs. Representative Town Meeting)
- Gather data from comparable communities
- Gather insights from Andover Town records
- Take public input

Second Focus: Depends on Form of Government findings

FORM OF GOVERNMENT OPTIONS FOR ANDOVER

FORM OF GOVERNMENT OPTIONS

Open Town Meeting

- **Town Meeting** passes legislation, budgets, zoning
- Once or twice each year
- **Voters** represent themselves
  - Voters may speak at Town Meeting
  - Voters vote
  - Voters may introduce legislation
- **Select Board** makes executive policy decisions
- Professional Town Manager manages operations

Most common form of government in Mass.

Representative Town Meeting

- **Town Meeting** passes legislation, budgets, zoning
- Once or twice each year
- **Elected** Town Meeting members represent voters
  - Voters may speak at Town Meeting
  - Representatives vote
  - Voters may introduce legislation
- **Select Board** makes executive policy decisions
- Professional Town Manager manages operations

Less common form of government in Mass.

Council-Manager

- **Council** passes legislation, budgets, zoning
- Once or twice each month
- **Elected** councilors represent voters
  - Voters may speak at Council meetings
  - Councilors vote
  - Councilors typically introduce legislation
- **Manager** makes executive policy decisions
- Professional Town Manager manages operations

Used in about half of US communities outside New England

Council-Mayor

- **Council** passes legislation, budgets, zoning
- Once or twice each month
- **Elected** councilors represent voters
  - Voters may speak at Council meetings
  - Councilors vote
  - Councilors typically introduce legislation
- **Mayor** makes executive policy decisions
- **Elected Mayor** manages operations

Used in about half of US communities outside New England

PROS AND CONS

Open Town Meeting

- Strongest voice & most control for residents
- Residents can sponsor "legislation"
- Maximum legislative transparency
- Town administration must persuade whole community
- Least agile option
- Not efficient
- Requires most voter effort
- Requires most administrative effort
- Sometimes uninformed "legislators"

Representative Town Meeting

- Voters have representatives to act on their behalf
- Requires less voter effort
- Requires less administrative effort
- Voters cannot vote on their own behalf
- Not agile
- Not efficient
- Potential of non-competitive rep. races, unfilled rep. seats, & rep. absenteeism

Council-Manager

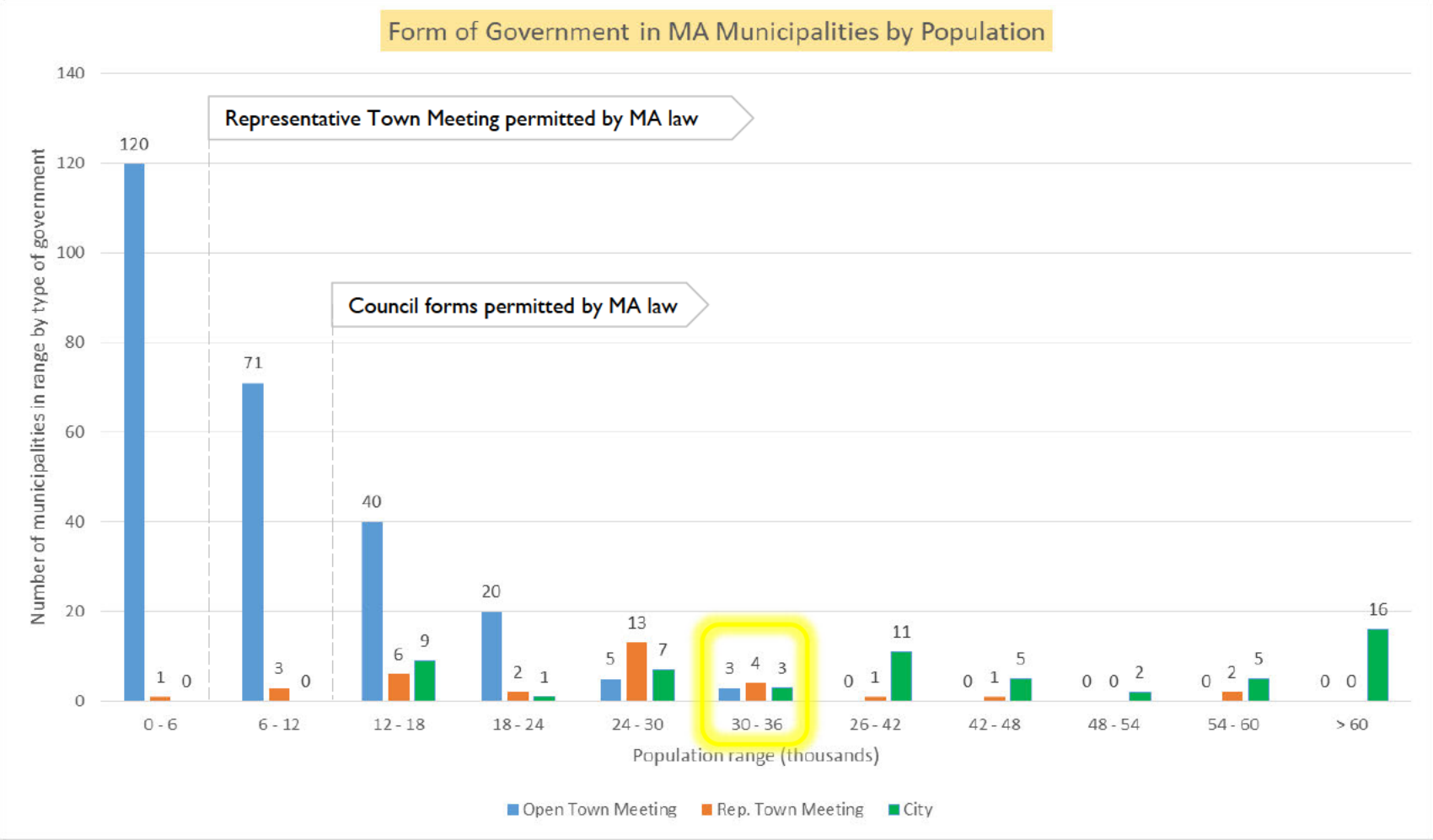
- Voters represented in the council
- Requires less voter effort
- Requires less administrative effort
- Agile
- Efficient
- Only elected councilors can vote on legislation – not participatory
- Big decisions (e.g., budget, zoning) an "insider's process"
- Council races may be uncontested

Council-Mayor

- Voters represented in the council
- Requires less voter effort
- Requires less administrative effort
- Agile
- Efficient
- Only elected councilors can vote on legislation – not participatory
- Big decisions an "insider's process"
- Council races may be uncontested
- Executive elected & maybe inexperienced

COMPARISON WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES

WHAT DOES OUR POPULATION SIZE SUGGEST?



Below 30,000 residents:
86% have Open Town Meeting

Above 36,000 residents:
91% have a council

30,000 – 36,000 residents:
Equal mix of forms

Andover's size as a large town – and not a small town or a city – does not suggest any particular form of government

Other metrics also inconclusive (median household income, proportion with English as second language, age, land area, ….)

WHAT DO COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES DO?

Town	County	Population	EQV ($/capita)	Land area	Population density	Moody's rating	S&P rating	Legislative body
Andover	Essex	36,403	232,212	30.85	1,180	Aa1	AAA	**Open Town Meeting (8 towns)**
Concord	Middlesex	19,211	342,119	24.52	783	Aaa		
Dracut	Middlesex	31,747	114,882	20.63	1,539		AA-	
North Andover	Essex	31,747	160,763	26.31	1,190	Aa2	AAA	
Sudbury	Middlesex	19,627	244,359	24.27	809		AAA	
Tewksbury	Middlesex	31,388	155,299	20.7	1,516		AA+	
Westford	Middlesex	24,296	196,511	30.27	803	Aa2	AAA	
Wilmington	Middlesex	23,907	193,818	16.98	1,408		AA+	
Belmont	Middlesex	26,330	298,160	4.65	5,662	Aaa		**Representative Town Meeting (8 towns)**
Billerica	Middlesex	43,784	155,118	25.57	1,712	Aa2	AA+	
Burlington	Middlesex	28,742	243,960	11.73	2,450	Aa1	AAA	
Chelmsford	Middlesex	35,313	165,659	22.37	1,579		AA+	
Danvers	Essex	27,727	186,962	13.28	2,088	Aa1	AA+	
Lexington	Middlesex	33,792	355,365	16.43	2,057	Aaa	AAA	
Reading	Middlesex	25,337	202,985	9.95	2,546	Aa2	AAA	
Winchester	Middlesex	22,851	336,137	6.03	3,790	Aaa	AAA	

Comparison with Andover's neighboring towns does not point us to favor either form of Town Meeting

OPEN TOWN MEETING IN ANDOVER

DATA CONSULTED

- Data from every voter on every night of every Town Meeting since 1998
- Scientific Survey conducted by the University of Massachusetts Center for Public Opinion – 1004 responding residents
- Review of Annual and Special Town Meeting warrants
- Review of Annual Town Election voter data





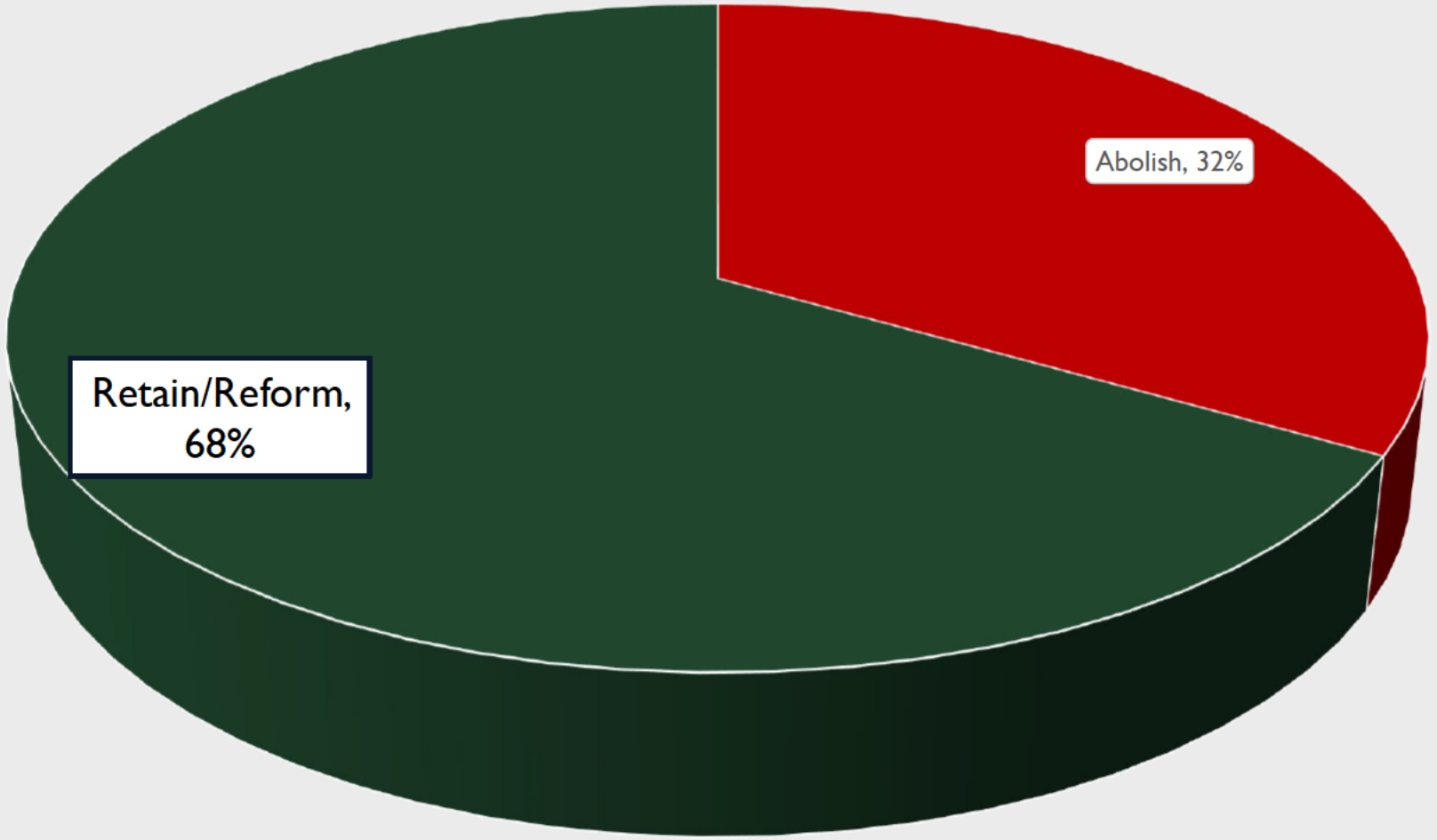


RESIDENT PREFERENCES ON TOWN MEETING

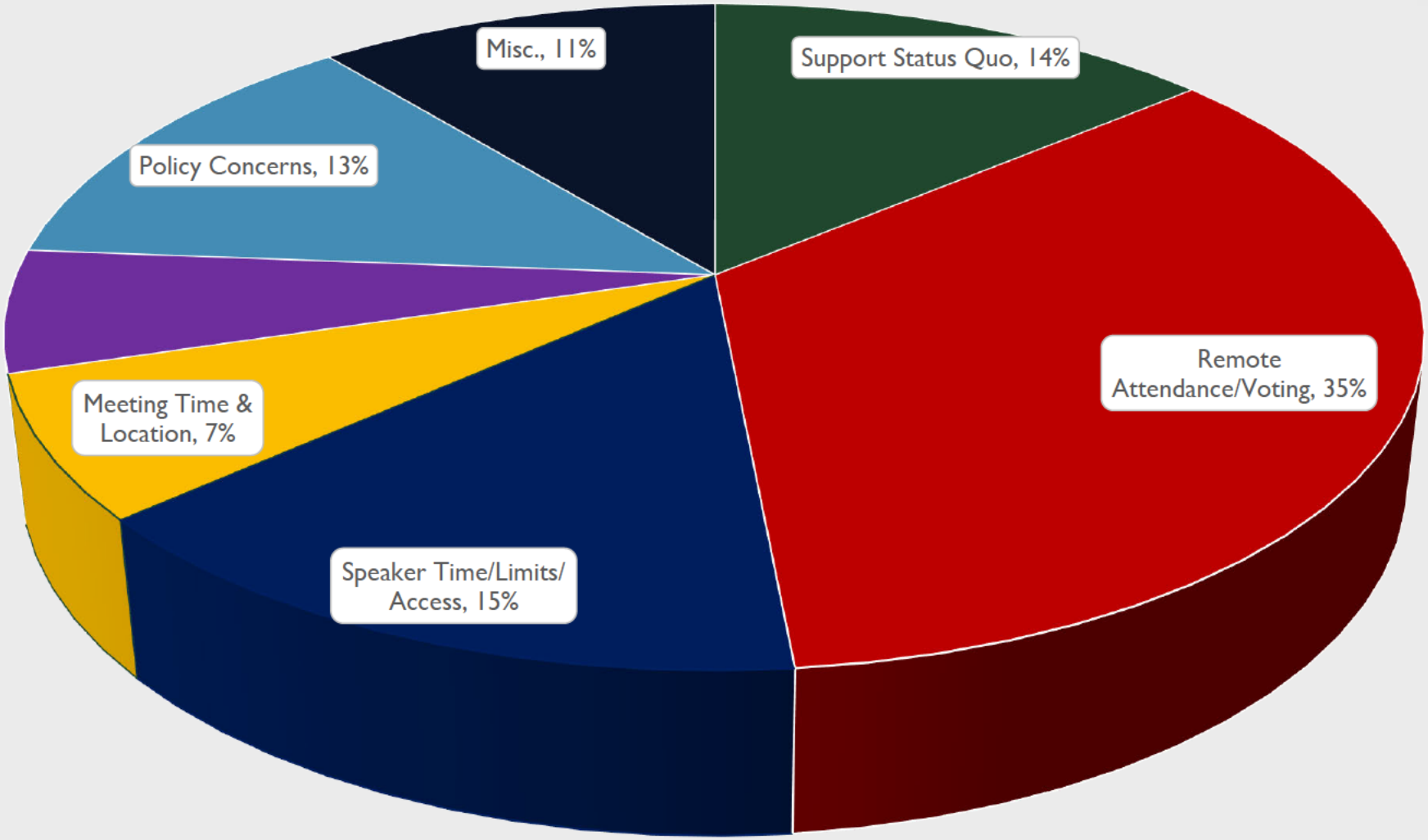
Question:
How to improve the conduct of Town Meeting?

Abolish Retain

RESIDENT PREFERENCES ON TOWN MEETING



AMONG THOSE WISHING TO RETAIN OPEN TOWN MEETING . . .

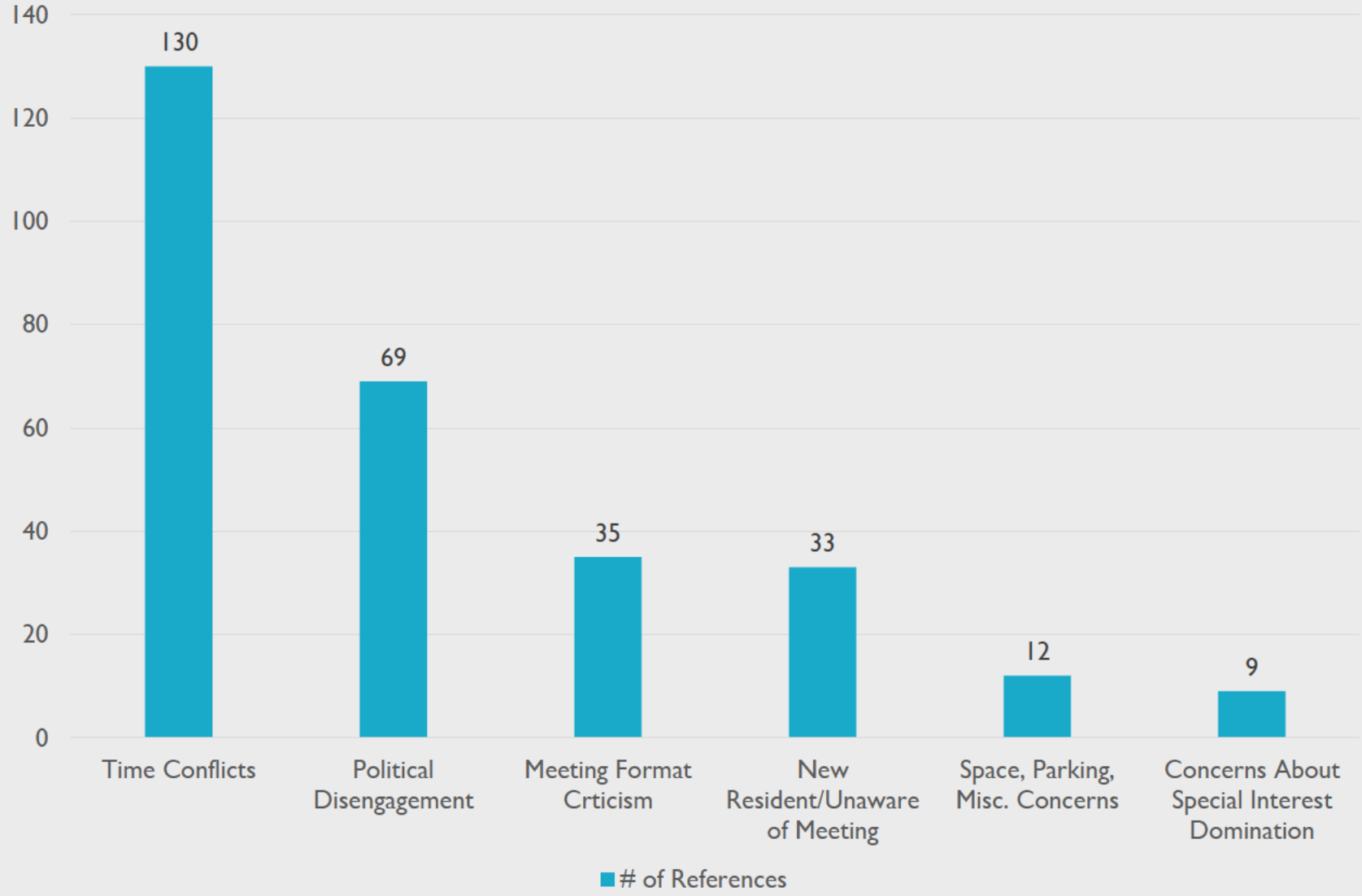


Listening & Civility Concerns, 5%

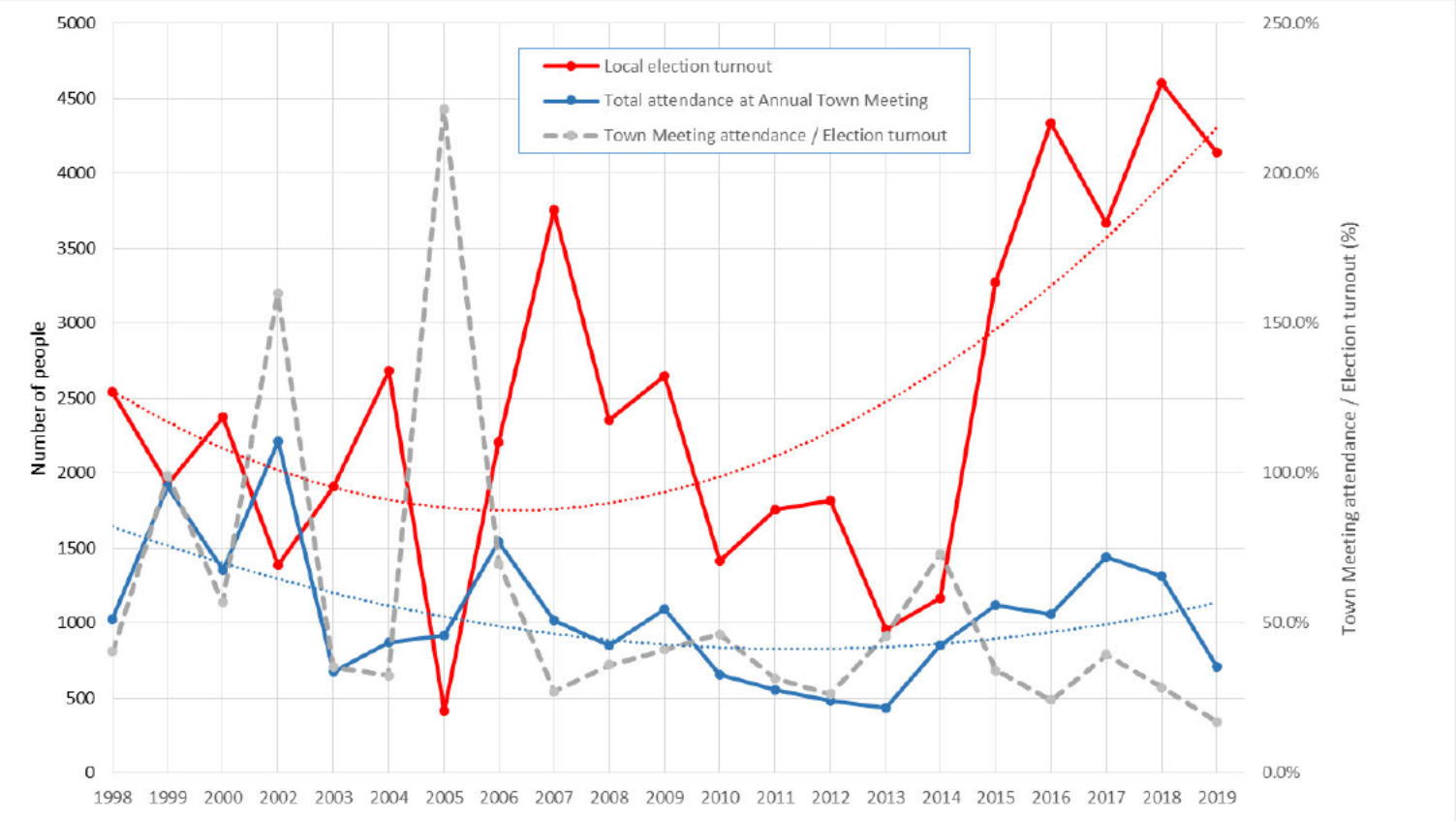
76% focused on remote voting, meeting time/location, civility, and speaker time/access

WHY RESIDENTS DON'T ATTEND TOWN MEETING

288/1004 Responses



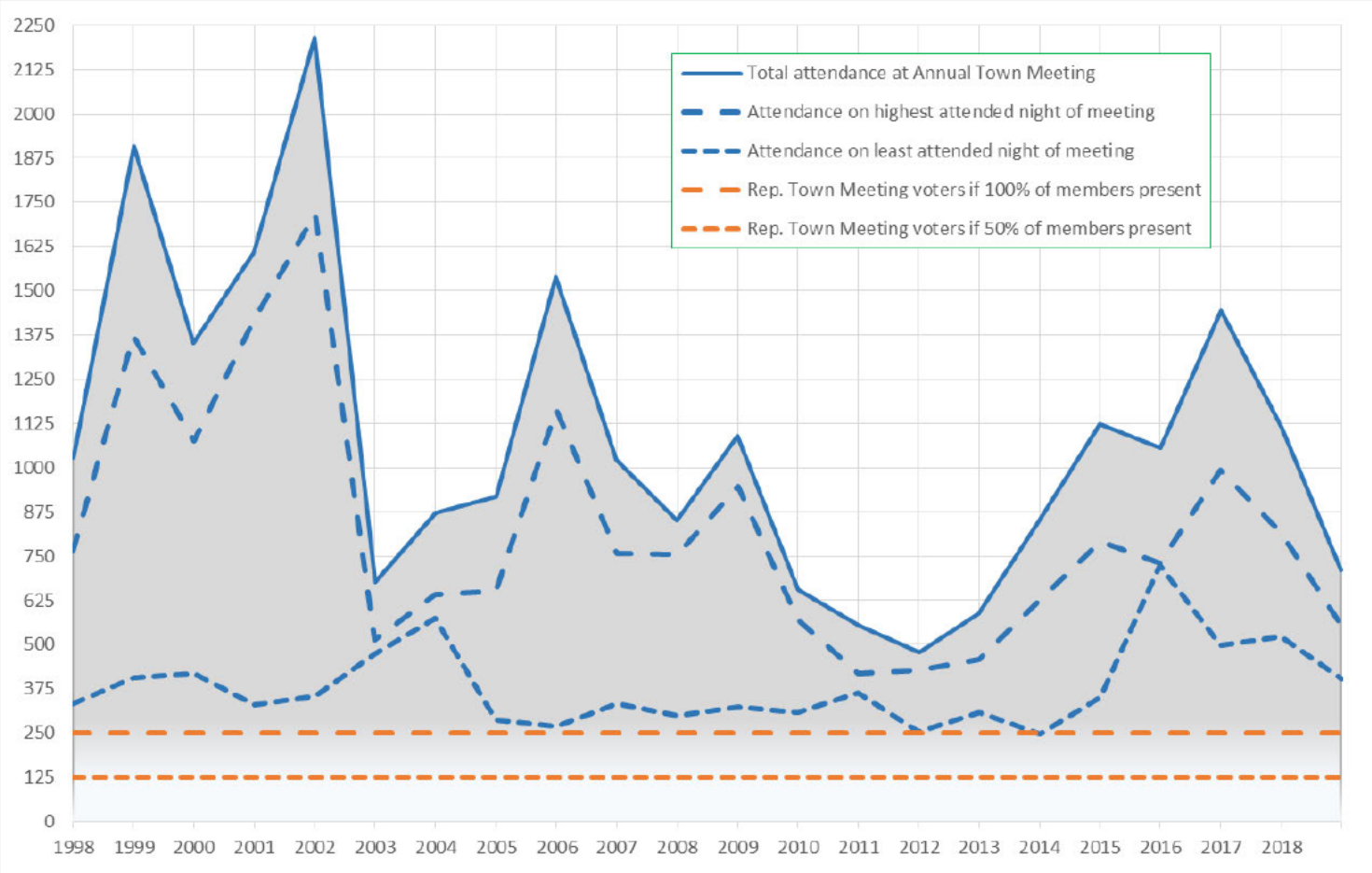
TOWN MEETING PARTICIPATION IN CONTEXT



- In any year, more than 25% of residents who vote in local elections attend Annual Town Meeting
- In some years, twice as many residents attend Annual Town Meeting than vote in local elections
- 500 residents attend at least one night of Annual Town Meeting in almost every year

Town Meeting attendance is strong amongst residents who are engaged in local government. In some years, Town Meeting is the principle form of engagement

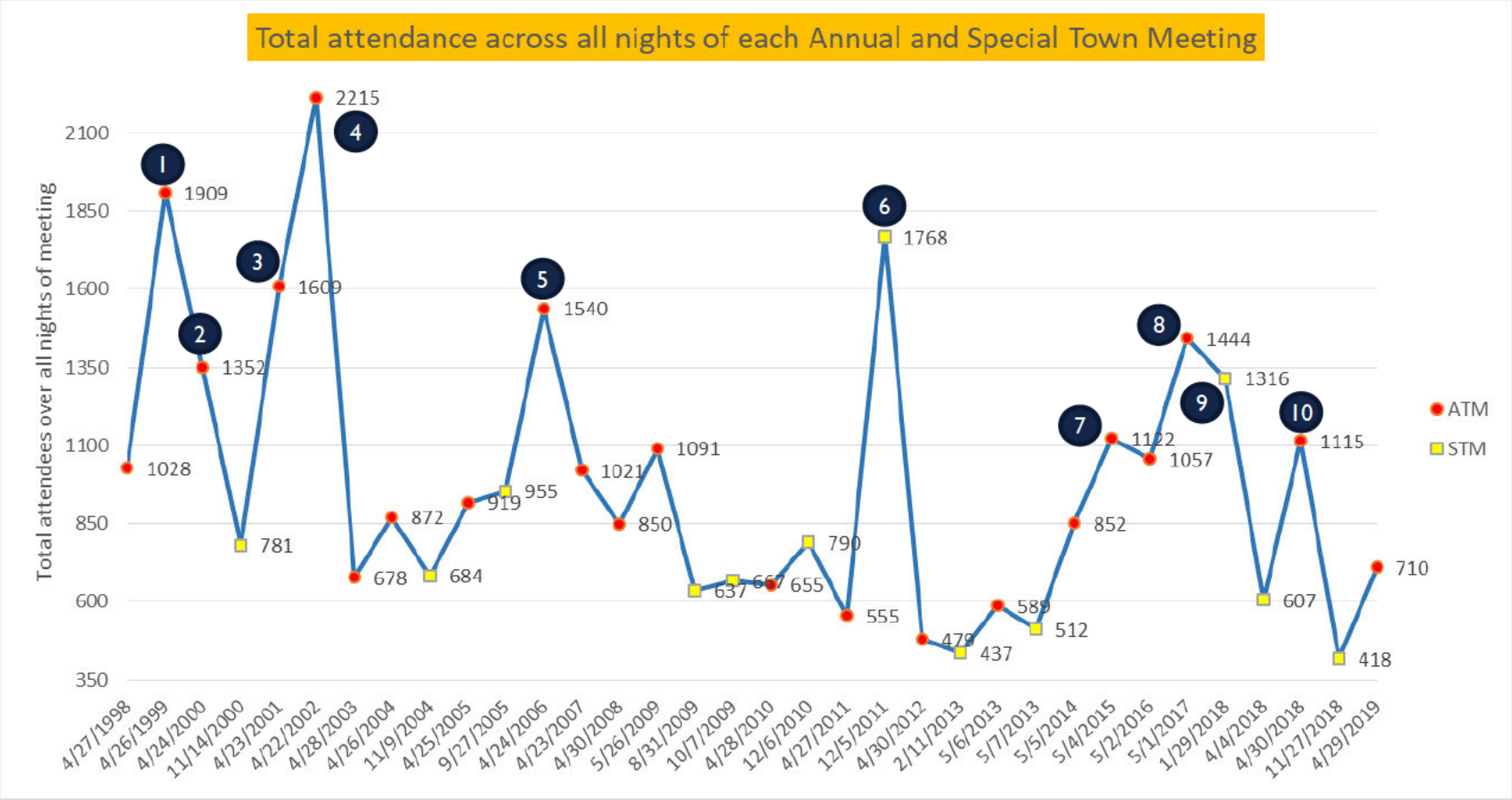
OPEN AND REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETINGS



- 250 would be maximum number of RTM members for Andover
- Shaded area represents residents who currently vote at OTM who would lose that right if Andover changed to RTM
- As many people attend the lowest-attended night of multi-night Town Meetings as would vote at an RTM with 100% of members present

Representative Town Meeting would suppress participation from the majority who currently attend Open Town Meeting today

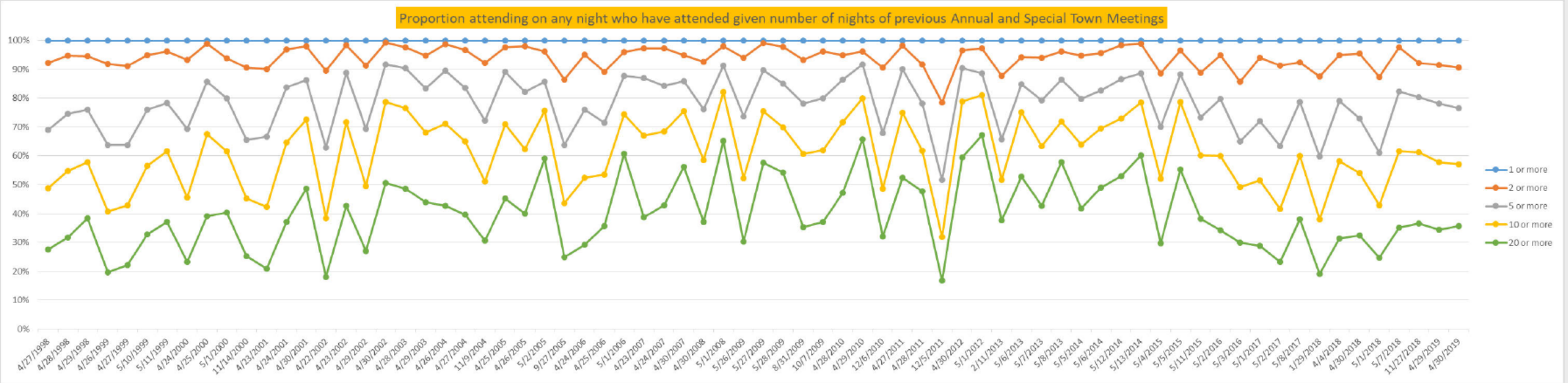
ATTENDANCE HIGH FOR BIG ISSUE ARTICLES



1. Public Safety Center Override / Community Preservation Act / Cross-districting
2. Middle school construction
3. Zoning Recodification
4. School Override/Zoning bylaws/Playing Fields
5. School budget/Wetlands
6. Youth Center
7. School budget/Zoning bylaws
8. School budget/Zoning bylaws/Dogs
9. Marijuana/Dascomb Road
10. N. Reading Water Deal/Marijuana

Articles with long-term effects on Andover are debated by a large number of engaged voters

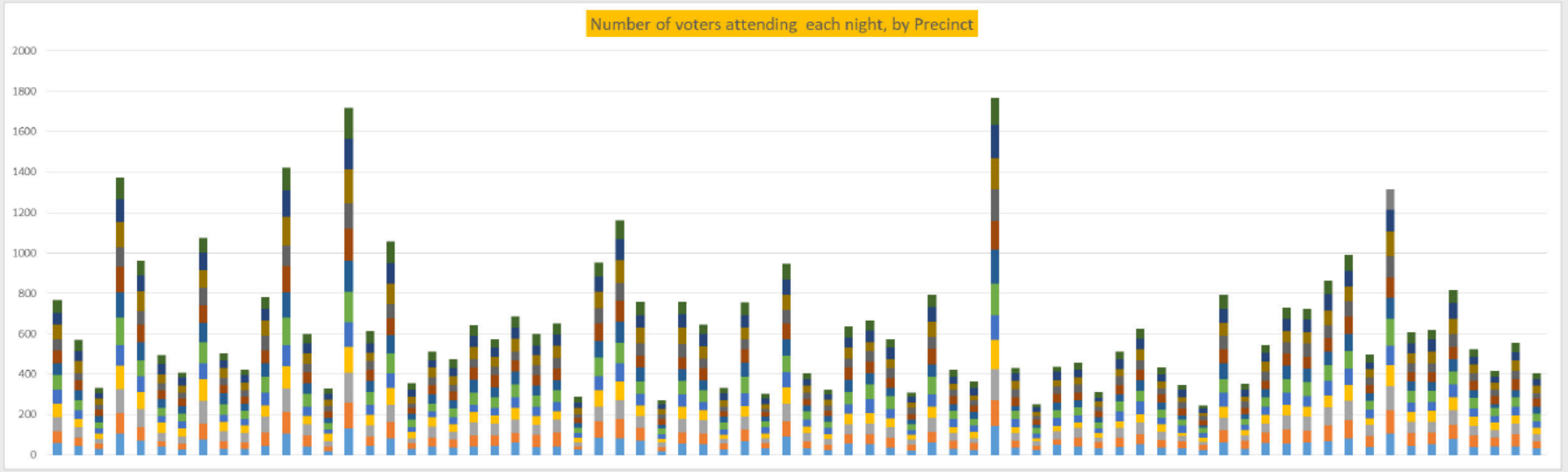
VOTER EXPERIENCE AND RETENTION

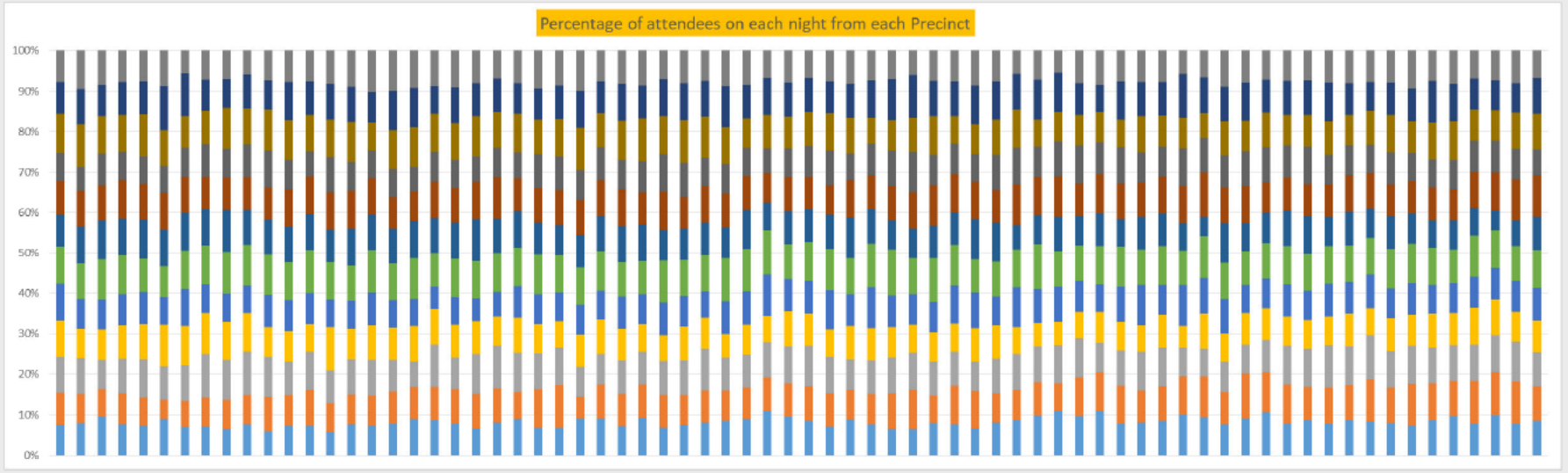


- On any given night . . .
  - 60 - 80% (typically around 70%) have attended 5 or more previous nights
  - 40 - 80% (typically around 60%) have attended 10 or more previous nights

Town Meeting voters are experienced

TOWN MEETING GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIVENESS





- Annual and Special Town Meetings since 1998
- Even representation from **each locality,** night after night, year on year
- No significant increase in turnout from localities most impacted by a vote
- **Open Town Meeting fairly represents Andover, not neighborhoods**

TOWN MEETING AGILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

Year	Special Town Meetings
1998	0
1999	0
2000	1
2001	0
2002	0
2003	0
2004	1
2005	1
2006	0
2007	0
2008	0
2009	2
2010	1
2011	1
2012	0
2013	1
2014	0
2015	0
2016	0
2017	0
2018	3
2019	2

- Annual Town Meeting provides a **perennial** forum for predicted issues
- For *unpredicted* issues:
  - 13 Special Town Meetings in last 22 years
  - **Several** of these coincided with Annual Town Meeting
  - Special Town Meetings held in 9 of the last 22 years
- **Urgent, unpredicted matters can be handled in a timely manner, with limited inconvenience, when they do arise**
  - **E.g., Vicor TIFF Agreement (April 2019)**
  - **E.g., Columbia Gas Settlement (June 2019)**

THE COMMITTEE'S WORKING HYPOTHESIS

WHY COMMUNITIES CHANGE THEIR GOVERNMENT?

COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

"Most changes to forms of government occur when there is a groundswell pushing for change."

Problem	Consequences	Applicable to Andover?
Political infighting	A divided community cannot make decisions	✗
Rapid growth & other changes	Opportunities lost due to slow decision-making	✗
Sub-optimal services	People not getting their money's worth. Lack of responsiveness.	✗
Economic stagnation	Lack of tax revenue	✗
Legal suits between internal groups	Government at conflict with itself	✗
Town Meeting defects	Low attendance, uneven representation, bad decisions	?
Inability to attract candidates/appointees to public office	No voter choice, no real voter control	✗

COMMITTEE'S WORKING HYPOTHESIS

Open Town Meeting	Representative Town Meeting	Council-Manager	Council-Mayor
Strong Preference	Not favored	Less Preferred	Not favored
❖ Most participatory ❖ Most transparent ❖ Good decisions for Andover ❖ Consistent with community history and culture	❖ Less participatory/ accessible ❖ Retains disadvantages of Town Meeting without the advantages of a council	❖ Less participatory/ accessible ❖ At odds with community history and culture	❖ Less participatory/ Accessible ❖ At odds with community history and culture ❖ Unwisely political

The committee has not formally decided its recommendation on form of government

TOWN MEETING REFORMS BEING CONSIDERED

Potential Reform	Intended Benefit
Prohibit events on Town/School property during Town Meeting	Eliminates conflicting demands for voters' time
Hold one-day meetings on weekend	Concentrates meeting to one day
Hold Town Meeting in multiple locations around Town	Reduces logistical barriers (travel time, parking, etc.)
Adopt electronic voting	Shortens meeting, allows confidential voting
Consolidate discussion of related articles even if separate votes are required	Shortens meeting, makes more understandable the context of articles
Submit amendments for public review prior to Town Meeting	Shortens meeting, eliminates cause of voter confusion, enables legal review and committee votes

TOWN MEETING REFORMS BEING CONSIDERED

Potential Reform	Intended Benefit
Allow for a vote on an article before consideration is given to an amendment	Saves time debating non-starter amendments
Adopt Town Meeting Code of Conduct	Encourages efficient, civil, and honest debate
Perennial fall Town Meeting for zoning/planning articles	Gives fuller hearing to zoning and planning articles
Provide online Town Meeting training videos re process, the budget, zoning, etc.	Makes process less daunting and encourages attendance, and smoother debate of complex articles
Deliberate but not vote, then return to vote on all articles on separate night (i.e., "bifurcation")	Creates platform allowing remote participation (though not remote voting)
Fully remote Town Meeting with deliberation and voting from home	Top request of UMass survey respondents. Not permitted under State law. May change in future

DISCUSSION AND DIALOGUE

CALL TO ACTION

LEARN MORE

- Members
- Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- Video Recordings
- Give Input
- See Input
- Published Reports
- Resources

Home › Governance › Boards & Commissions F - Z › Town Governance Study Committee

Town Governance Study Committee

The Town Governance Study Committee shall be charged with studying, and proposing beneficial amendments to, the town's charter, bylaws, and governing practices as they relate to Andover's form of government and governance.

The committee shall:

- Study the town's form of government and governance.
- Examine models of government in comparable communities.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in Andover's current government, and recommend any amendments to the charter, bylaws, and governing practices so as to improve the town's form of government and governance.
- Facilitate public engagement on, and the public's discussion of, the committee's work.

Upon completion of its work, the committee shall submit to the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen a summary of its findings and any recommended amendments to the charter, bylaws, and governing practices.



Please click on a graphic to learn more

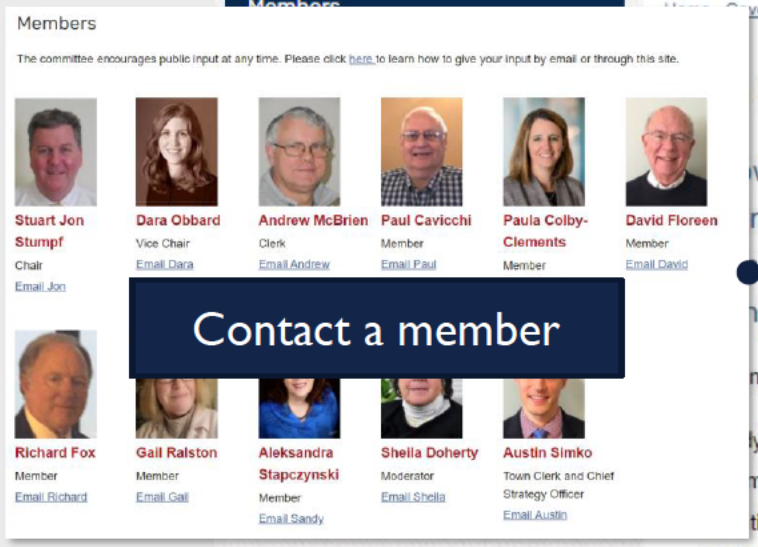
Coming Events

Sat Jan. 9
Town Governance Study Committee Public Forum

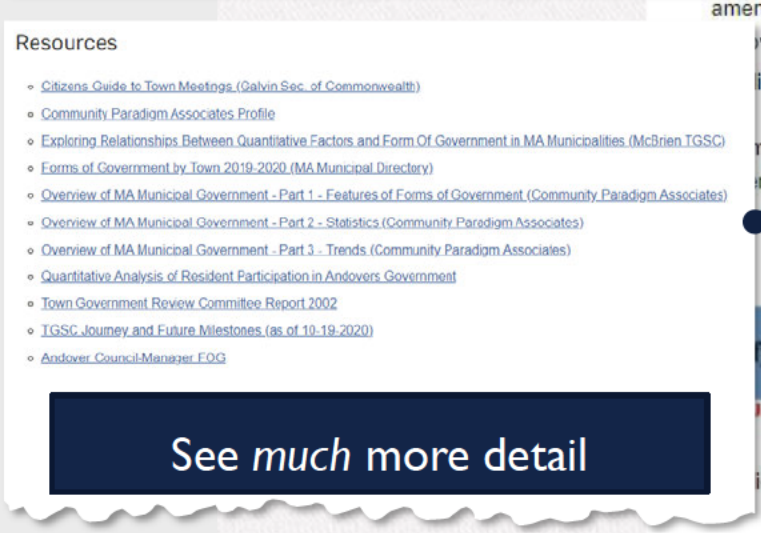
Tue Jan. 12
Town Governance Study Committee Public Forum

View All

LEARN MORE

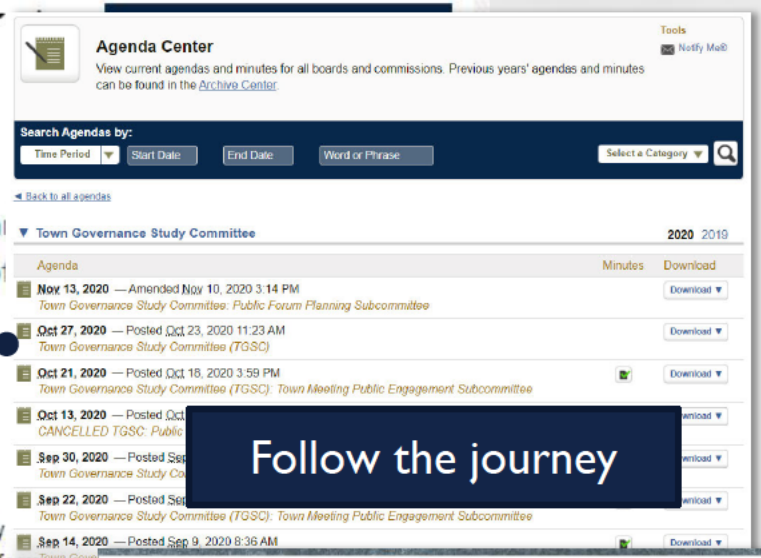


Contact a member

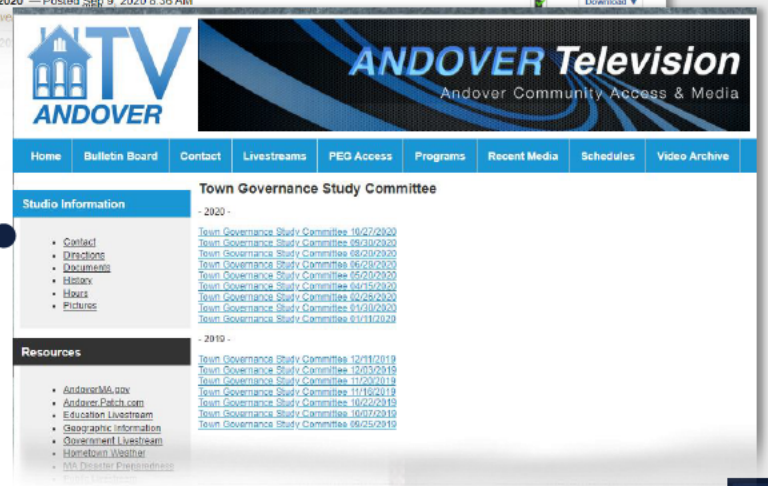


See *much* more detail

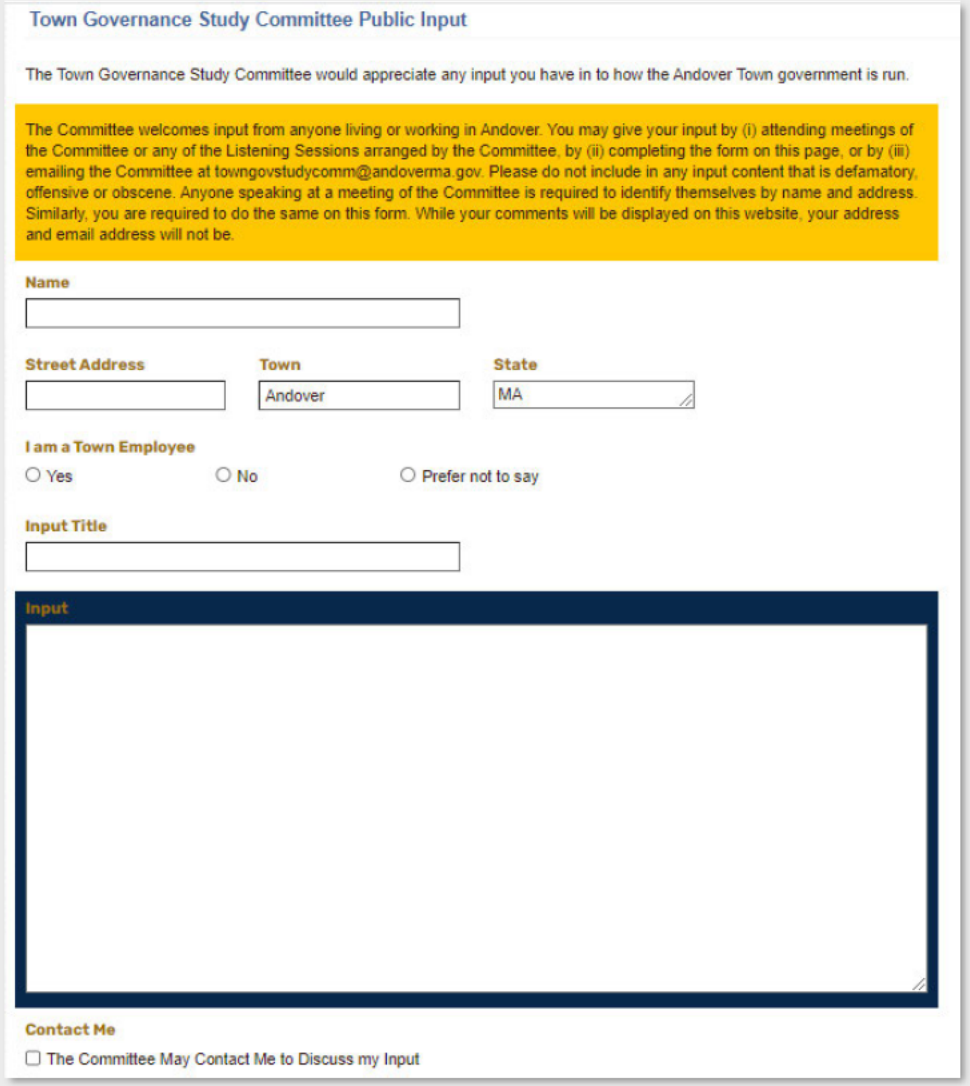




Follow the journey



PROVIDE INPUT



Town Governance Study Committee Public Input

The Town Governance Study Committee would appreciate any input you have in to how the Andover Town government is run.

The Committee welcomes input from anyone living or working in Andover. You may give your input by (i) attending meetings of the Committee or any of the Listening Sessions arranged by the Committee, by (ii) completing the form on this page, or by (iii) emailing the Committee at towngovstudycomm@andoverma.gov. Please do not include in any input content that is defamatory, offensive or obscene. Anyone speaking at a meeting of the Committee is required to identify themselves by name and address. Similarly, you are required to do the same on this form. While your comments will be displayed on this website, your address and email address will not be.

Name

Street Address | Town | State

Andover | MA

I am a Town Employee

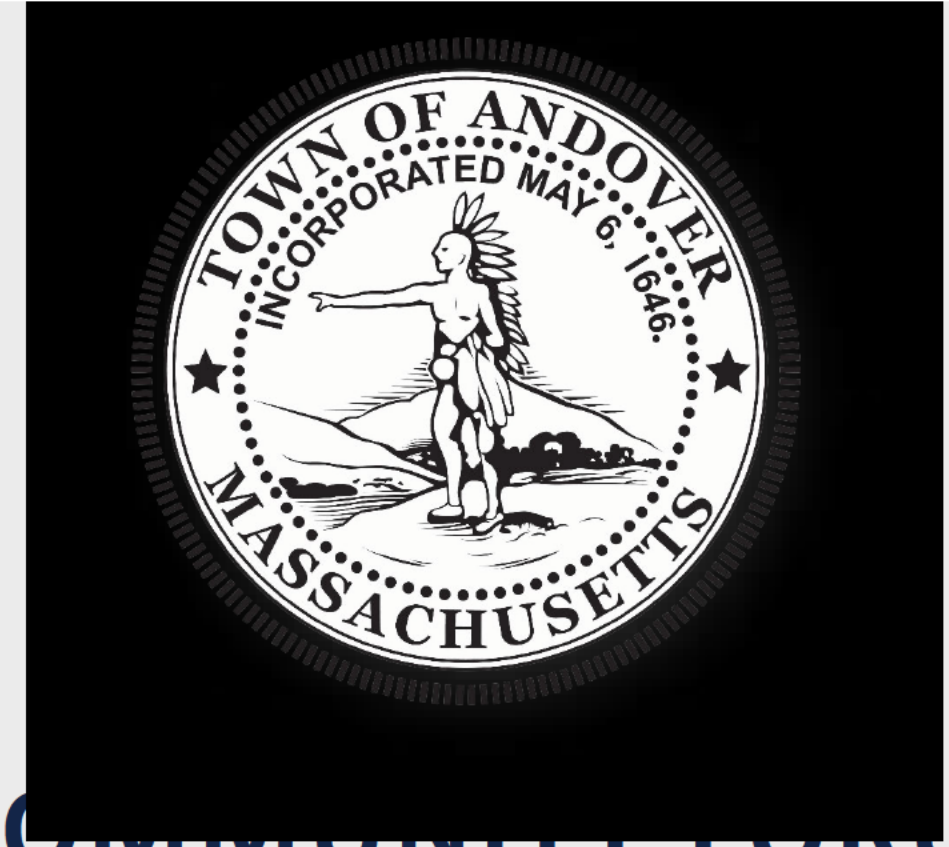
Yes | No | Prefer not to say

Input Title

Input

Contact Me

The Committee May Contact Me to Discuss my Input



COMMUNITY FORUM

TOWN GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE

Thank you

Report of the

Town Governance Study Committee

December 10, 2021

Committee Members

S. Jon Stumpf, Chair
Dara Epstein Obbard, Vice Chair
Andrew McBrien, Clerk
Paula Colby-Clements
David Floreen
Richard Fox
Gail L. Ralston
Aleksandra Stapczynski
Austin Simko
Sheila M. Doherty, Ex-Officio

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Section 1 - Foreword by the Chair

To the Residents of Andover,

In April of 2019, the Select Board unanimously approved the Town Manager's proposal to form the Town Governance Study Committee (the "Committee"). The Committee was charged with studying and proposing beneficial amendments to the Town's charter, bylaws, and governing practices as they relate to Andover's form of government and governance.

This report reflects the research conducted by the Committee to address our charge. It begins with this Foreword, which outlines the main topics within the report. An Executive Summary follows which is designed for readers interested in more detail. The "body" of the report, which readers can navigate using the Table of Contents, presents and addresses a myriad of research in detail.

Currently the Charter authorizes an Open Town Meeting - Select Board - Town Manager form of government. The Town is overseen by an elected five-member Select Board and is administered by an appointed professional Town Manager. Andover's public schools are overseen by an elected five-member School Committee, and administered by an appointed professional Superintendent.

Our Committee's journey began in September 2019, and continued throughout the pandemic and all of 2020 and 2021. We studied the Town's form of government and governance. We examined the models of government in comparable communities. We reached out to residents, Town employees, businesses, community organizations, appointed and elected officials, and others to identify strengths and weaknesses in Andover's current government. We facilitated significant public engagement on, and the public's discussion of, the committee's work.

After due consideration, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend retaining Open Town Meeting with significant reforms. The Committee has also recommended a suite of other changes on topics ranging from the recall of elected officials to the date at which elected officials take office. Many residents feel that Andover is a wonderful community which provides excellent services to the residents. Like any entity, there are opportunities for improvement, and we have outlined those within the section of the report detailing recommended reforms.

In closing, we thank the Select Board and the Town Manager in providing the resources needed to complete our work, as well as Community Paradigm Associates for their insights and efforts as our professional consultants Lastly, I would like to recognize and thank the members of this Committee, for all their effort, hard work and commitment to our community.

Town Governance Study Committee
S. Jon Stumpf, Chair
December 10, 2021

Section 2 - Executive Summary

This summary highlights key recommendations of the Committee. In the interest of concision, this summary does not enumerate every recommendation and stops short of explaining and justifying each position. Readers are strongly urged to read the main body of the report to understand recommendations of interest.

A. Retain Andover's Open Town Meeting Form of Government

During a two-year comprehensive review of Andover's form of governance, the Committee hosted seven public forums, held 61 committee and subcommittee meetings, gathered input from residents and organizations, interviewed elected officials, researched peer communities, and dived deeply into decades of Andover's voter history data. The Committee has strived to listen, evaluate, and incorporate what it learned into its recommendations.

There is no perfect governance model – nor is there one all residents agree with. The best form of governance for a community is the one that provides residents with, on balance, the strongest blend of effectiveness, transparency, efficiency, representation, accountability, and accessibility.

The Committee unanimously agreed that the community is best served by retaining Open Town Meeting and adopting several enhancements that aim to improve Andover's Town Meeting. The Committee rests its recommendation to retain Open Town Meeting with reforms on the following "pillars."

1. Open Town Meeting allows for direct legislative participation by any registered voter.

2. Open Town Meeting draws on the ideas, perspectives, and votes of hundreds of residents, benefiting from the "wisdom of the crowd" phenomenon.

3. Open Town Meeting ensures that the Town's legislature operates with maximum transparency.

4. Open Town Meeting allows residents to represent themselves or to take comfort that hundreds of peer residents are representing the interests of the community in a way no representative government could.

5. Open Town Meeting is the most diverse, inclusive, and equitable legislature because the barriers to participation are lower than the barriers that exist in a representative form of government, where individuals must rely on agents to act on their behalf.

Standing together, these pillars support a governing and civic culture defined by decision-making by the whole community; residents who have ownership over the direction of the Town;

residents who can act as knowledgeable ambassadors to their peers who may not have the time or inclination to participate in Town Meeting;[1] and a government checked and balanced by the residents.

The Committee heard and took seriously the following concerns about Open Town Meeting:

Residents' Concern	Committee Conclusion
Other forms of government are more representative	No form of government has "cracked the code" on equally representing the population at large
Andover is too large for Open Town Meeting	All forms of government are used in communities with similar populations to Andover
Town Meeting attendance is low, and falling	A substantial proportion (i.e., 25%) of engaged voters (i.e., those who vote in Annual Town Elections) attend Town Meeting, and attendance is stable
Big decisions are made by a fraction of the community	Big decisions are made by a substantial portion (i.e., 25%) of engaged voters (i.e., those who vote in Annual Town Elections)
Votes at Town Meeting are "stacked" by special-interest groups	A large proportion of attendees at any Town Meeting are regular attendees
Votes at Open Town Meeting are dominated by "NIMBY" (Not In My Back Yard)	Open Town Meeting geographically represents Andover as a whole

In general, the Committee found no broad public demand for a change in Andover's form of government, and, relatedly, that the rationales typically attendant to form of government change are not present in Andover. Further, while several residents expressed frustration with the current Open Town Meeting format, there was no consensus on what alternatives were preferred. This was important context for the Committee as it considered alternative forms of government, for the Committee appreciated that changes in form of government can be destabilizing, confusing to residents, difficult to calibrate, and potentially generative of unintended effects on a community's policy and culture.

Further, the Committee found that, at this time, no alternative form of government provided benefits that, on balance, result in a government materially superior to Andover's current form of government. The studied principal alternatives were Representative Town Meeting, Council-Manager, and Council-Mayor. Many of the ostensibly attractive features of these alternatives raised several significant concerns. This report analyzes in detail the benefits, detriments, and defects of these alternative forms of government. The Committee's understanding of these defects and detriments was critical to its decision to recommend retention of Open Town Meeting.

[1] Throughout this report, references to "Town Meeting" include both Annual and Special Town Meetings, unless otherwise specified.

No Massachusetts community that has discarded its Open Town Meeting form of government has been able to return to it after a failed trial of representative government. Given that discarding Open Town Meeting would be an historic, seismic transformation of the Town's government, it would be irresponsible for the Committee to recommend a change – which it independently and strongly assesses to be unnecessary – that could have unintended consequences to the community's culture and from which we could not return.

B. Open Town Meeting Enhancements & Reforms

In recommending that the Town retain its Open Town Meeting form of government, the Committee was attuned to areas where Andover's Town Meeting could be improved.[2] The Committee believes that several enhancements to Andover's Open Town Meeting will provide substantial improvements to the meeting's deliberative process and increase voter engagement. The Committee's recommendation for the retention of Open Town Meeting, while not conditioned on adoption of the below reforms, is emphatically offered with the following strong reform and enhancement recommendations. The Committee does not support the status quo, and these reforms seek to change the status quo.

i. Adopt In-Person Electronic Voting.

In-person electronic voting has the potential to shorten and enhance Town Meeting. In addition to making "standing counts" quicker, in-person electronic voting also guarantees confidentiality and privacy in voting. The Committee heard that many voters who attend Town Meeting are concerned about reprisals and some voters are even unwilling to attend Town meeting because of this fear. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that adopting electronic voting may enfranchise voters and enhance the democratic process.

ii. Consolidate Discussion of Related Articles Even if Separate Votes are Required.

Town Meeting articles are often linked together by general topics. The Committee recommends that articles that are directly linked by topic and substance be consolidated for discussion, albeit with separate votes, so Town Meeting can engage in deliberation that is not artificially compartmentalized by legal procedure. This will likely allow more thorough, holistic, and efficient deliberation.

[2] The Committee recommends that Andover retain its Open Town Meeting form of government. It does so with full recognition of Open Town Meeting's current flaws. Government is, in essence, a collection of persons and human processes forged in civic debate and tempered by evolving circumstances. In this context, no government is perfect. The many enhancements recommended by the Committee aim at curbing these flaws in our Town Meeting structure and practices.

iii. Promote Civil, Honest, and Efficient Debate at Town Meeting.

Town Meeting deliberations should be honest, open, civil, and efficient (i.e., respectful of attendees' time). The Committee strongly supports the current practice wherein the Moderator asks each Town Meeting to affirm values contributing to civility. While a "code of conduct" is too prescriptive and difficult to enforce, actions that encourage proper discourse and decorum should be advanced.

iv. Prohibit Events on Town & School Property During Town Meeting Sessions.

Attending Town Meeting can be difficult for residents with families, work obligations, and myriad other competing commitments. The Committee recommends that the Select Board and School Committee, which have jurisdiction and control over the use of Town- and School-owned property, consider and take public input on precluding sports, theater, and other events on Town property during these relatively few hours each year. The Town should not "counter-program" its own legislature and make it harder for residents to do their civic duty.

v. Encourage Pre-Submission of Town Meeting Article Amendments.

The Committee recommends that the Town incentivize pre-submission of article amendments for review prior to Town Meeting. Under the Committee's suggested framework, article amendments would be submitted three business days before the first session of Town Meeting. This would allow for Town Counsel and committees to review and consider amendments before Town Meeting, thereby creating both efficiency, transparency, and "good legislating" effects. Under this framework, amendments could, as is the current practice, be submitted on the floor of Town Meeting (in addition to the pre-submission of amendments).

vi. Pre-Town Meeting Discussion of Articles.

The Committee recommends a pre-Town Meeting forum that would effectively provide a degree of non-binding remote deliberation before the commencement of Town Meeting. This would promote transparency, perhaps make Town Meeting more efficient, allow more residents to engage, and serve good governance by more fully vetting articles. This forum would not alter the status quo practices surrounding how articles are presented, debated, and voted upon during Town Meeting. Instead, there would be made available to residents days or a week before Town Meeting a live-streamed, remote, and in-person session wherein public and private article proponents would present on their articles and answer questions from residents.

vii. Provide Town Meeting Education Resources.

The Town Administration should produce short information videos that educate residents on Town Meeting nomenclature (e.g., "warrants" and "articles"), procedure (e.g., for making amendments), and the substance of articles (e.g., bylaws, zoning, the budget). The content should

be brief, accessible, and straight-forward. Town Meeting procedures, and the content of articles deliberated on at Town Meeting, can be daunting for any resident.

viii. Provide Welcome Packets to New Residents.

The Town should send each new resident a personalized "welcome packet" containing a message from the community, links to key Town offices and boards, and sharing key information about how the Town's government operates. This information may touch upon, but should not be limited to, Town Meeting. Welcoming new residents will make this a friendlier community, and a better informed one.

ix. Explore Remote Electronic Voting.

Remote electronic voting is not yet permissible for Open Town Meeting forms of government. Given this, no action can be taken at this time. Andover should stay attuned as facts and understandings evolve on this topic. The potential for bringing Town Meeting to residents' homes, pulling a centuries-old form of government into the 21st Century, is powerful and reflects the realities of today's dynamic society.

C. Secondary Study Topics.

i. Committee Appointment, Existence, Structure, Etc.

The Committee recommends the following regarding how board and committee are elected, appointed, term-limited, and other related items:

- The Committee did not identify any appointed positions that should instead be elected.
- The Committee does not recommend that appointment for boards and committees be made by a central "committee on appointments." The Committee supports the Town Manager's current authority to appoint the majority of board and committee members. The Committee recommends ways in which lengthy vacancies on boards and committees may be avoided.
- The Committee does not support imposition of term limits. Limits imposed woodenly may force removal of experienced, knowledgeable volunteers who have learned over time how best to function on boards or who might have spent many years learning the technical areas of their boards' work.
- As an alternative to fixed term limits, in order to give other residents the opportunity to serve on a board and provide a healthy degree of turnover, the Committee recommends that, when the Town Manager's Office notifies an incumbent member that the member's term is ending, that member should be required to respond with a statement that the member wishes to continue to serve. The member should then be evaluated in comparison to other applicants.

- The Committee recommends that a Water Commission not be established; that the Board of Health be expanded from three to five members; that the method of appointing Finance Committee members not be altered; and that the Planning Board retain its five-year terms and that it continue to be appointed rather than elected.
- Currently, all Town employees, which exception of the Town Accountant, are appointed by the Town Manager and subject to confirmation by the Select Board. The Committee recommends that the Select Board only confirm the Town Manager's appointments for the following employee positions: Deputy Town Manager, Police Chief, Fire Rescue Chief, and Finance Director.

ii. Town Communications.

The Committee recommends the following:

- The Town should dedicate a full-time staff person to coordinate the myriad efforts, current and new, around internal and external communication.
- A regular digest, or Precis, should be provided to residents conveying information about the administration and public bodies.
- Website videos of public body meetings should be "tagged" to allow residents to quickly and easily skip to portions of meetings that interest them.
- A "Citizens Academy" should provide in-depth information to residents about different aspects of Andover's government and civic system.
- Civics information should be shared with residents through inserts included in excise tax bills.
- More aggressively advertise the News Flash service.
- Encourage other stakeholders to explore the facilitation of a non-governmental news gathering operation. This entity may be a nonprofit organization or a public benefit corporation.
- Wherever possible, boards and committees should live-stream and broadcast their meetings, and take public comment from remote participants.

iii. Long-Term Financial Planning.

The Committee recommends that long-term, financially sustainable fiscal planning and forecasting be proposed to the Select Board by the Town Manager, who may consult with the Revenue & Expenditure Task Force, to the Select Board and used to inform the Capital Improvement Program, budget plan, and other fiscally-relevant matters (e.g., land acquisitions). Such planning and forecasting should be done with a 10-year horizon and updated every five years. The plan should account for necessary fiscal expenditures, anticipated revenues, appropriate levels of indebtedness, etc. This long-term financial planning would accomplish for fiscal operations what master planning achieves for land use and facilities operations.

iv. Government Business Processes –

The Committee recommends that steps be taken to improve governance-related processes that impact Andover businesses. For example, to expedite the issuance of permits, special permits, variances, and licenses, we recommend that Town public bodies with respective jurisdictions coordinate their reviews and approvals to allow an efficient process that does not sacrifice thoroughness, diligence, compliance with the law, and protection of the community's interests. Also, the Town should enhance communication with and education of businesses about the municipal regulatory framework. We further recommend that the Town Manager or his/her designee periodically report to the Select Board, not less than once every two years, on the state of and improvements to the Town's business processes.

v. Annual Town Elections and Annual Town Meeting.

The Committee noted that the status quo practice of holding Annual Town Elections on the fourth Tuesday in March and Town Meeting in early May presents challenges to the governance system. In particular, new officials elected to their seats in March have very little time before Town Meeting to apprise themselves of complex budget, zoning, and bylaw articles that will be decided at the May Annual Town Meeting. And, even when newly elected officials educate themselves, they nonetheless represent different political actors than the ones who led the multi-month process culminating in the imminent Town Meeting.

We therefore recommend that the Annual Town Election remain at its current time of year but that the effective-date for office-taking be after Annual Town Meeting. Accordingly, the current sequencing of Annual Town Elections and Annual Town Meeting would not change – but newly-elected officials would not take office until after Annual Town Meeting.

vi. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Committee applauds the ongoing work of the Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Administration, and hopes these steps are just the beginning of a progressive understanding of our Town, our country, and the world that we live in. The Committee further hopes that these active and vigorous efforts will impact all communities and will reach all levels of governance throughout the Town.

vii. Residency Requirement for the Town Manager.

Andover requires its Town Manager to be a resident of the town within a certain period of time after commencement of employment. While residency requirements were common 20 or more years ago, in light of advances in technology, escalating housing costs, and the reality that Town Manager candidates likely have working spouses to consider, very few communities currently maintain a residency requirement for their manager/administrator. While the benefit and allure of a resident manager was not lost on the Committee, the Committee felt that no consideration is

more important than attracting the best and most capable candidates to lead the Town government. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Town remove the existing residency requirement for the Town Manager.

viii. Ranked-Choice Voting on Local Election Ballots.

After an in-depth study of historical local election data, it was determined that ranked-choice voting might have led to a different outcome in only one or two of the 29 elections studied. Therefore, the broader question of whether benefits of ranked-choice voting outweigh the disadvantages for Andover local elections or vice versa is rendered moot. The Committee recommends that ranked-choice voting should not be pursued further in Andover at this time.

ix. Recall of Local Elected Officials.

Andover currently has no formal mechanism, other than public persuasion, to remove an elected official even for the most egregious infractions, such as criminal offenses or other actions deemed so significant that an official no longer has the ability or mandate to perform his or her duties. Ultimately, the Committee recognized that State and federal governments, as well as many Massachusetts communities, provide a means by which an elected official can be removed and replaced. As a matter of logic and good governance, Andover voters should not be absolutely deprived of the ability to remove an official elected by voters.

The Committee recommends strongly that a recall mechanism be adopted with high thresholds establishing the calling of a special recall election and ancillary procedural hurdles. The Committee has recommended such thresholds in the body of this report.

Section 3. Background & Context

A. History of Andover's Form of Government

The Town Meeting system has been a dominant form of governance in New England since Colonial times. At that time, the separation of Church and State was a concept unknown to the Puritan founders of Massachusetts. Town government and church organization were essentially one and the same.

Within three years of settlement, town charters were granted to Andover only when 10 Congregational church members – the only ones legally able to hold land – hired a minister and agreed to build a meeting house, both for worship and for town business.

In Andover, founded in 1646, the oldest existing records are those of the 1656 Town Meeting. With a Moderator, usually a position held by the church minister, only male church members could attend and vote. A quorum in the 1600s required only seven members.

By 1670, all male landowners were eligible to vote, regardless of church affiliation. Women were not a part of Town Meeting until 1920, a full 250 years later.

The original town meetings were held in what is now the North Parish Church in North Andover. When population increased exponentially in the south part of town and distance to church became unwieldy, a separate south parish was created in 1709. Town meetings now alternated from year to year between the two parishes. South Church in Andover was established in 1711 and became the town meeting house of the South Parish.

Political differences eventually led to a permanent split, and in 1855, the state legislature granted the parish's request to legally separate into Andover and North Andover, separate towns each with its own Town Meeting.

Before the mid-1950s, Andover's town government was highly decentralized. A three-member Board of Selectmen directly supervised many of the Town's operations. An elected Board of Public Works, Board of Health, and Board of Library Trustees oversaw other Town functions. Even the Assessor was an elected position.

Responding to suggestions for change, the 1955 Annual Town Meeting voted to create a study committee to report on various forms of town government and make a recommendation to the next town meeting – not unlike subsequent committees and the charge of our current committee. A recommendation was to be made at the next Town Meeting.

The 1955 group formally proposed the Town Manager form and asked that another committee be created to write a new Town Charter. Voters in 1955 approved both measures, and the former study group was reappointed as a charter-writing committee.

A community's charter change in Massachusetts requires approval by the State legislature, and during the summer of 1956, a home rule petition was approved by the Legislature's Committee on Towns and eventually signed into law as Chapter 43B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The new charter also required voter approval, and was to be placed on the ballot for three years, or until adopted, whichever happened first. After considerable debate, the initial vote took place in 1957. The new charter lost, 1,745 in favor; 2,791 against.

More heated debate followed, and the 1958 vote produced a different result: 3,138 in favor and 2,792 against. Accordingly, on March 3, 1959, Andover officially began its experience with a town manager form of government.

The Town election that year also replaced the former three-person Board of Selectmen with a new five-member board with staggered terms. All three of the former selectmen were defeated, all having been opposed to the charter change.

Under the new charter, the town manager took over the appointment responsibilities of several of the formerly-elected boards, appointing the public works director, the assessor, the library trustees, and the board of health. De facto, the town manager became the single professional administrator, directly overseeing all town operations except the running of the school system.

To allow time to search for the first Town Manager, the newly-elected Board of Selectmen appointed Victor J. Mill, Jr. as Interim Town Manager. In May 1959, Andover's search ended and Thomas C. Duff was appointed for a five-year term. Subsequent Town Mangers included Richard J. Bowen, Maynard J. Austin, Jared Clark, Kenneth Mahoney, and Reginald "Buzz" Stapczynski. Andrew Flanagan serves as Andover's current Town Manager.

It should be noted that in Massachusetts, as in all other states, under the Dillon Rule municipalities do not have independent authority and derive their power and authority solely from the Massachusetts legislature. A municipality must conform to current provisions of the General Laws or seek legislation giving approval to any change. Cities and towns may exercise Home Rule power to the extent that their actions are not inconsistent with the state constitution and General Laws.

However, by 1963, in response to the volume of bills related to minor matters in cities and towns, the Legislature began to work on new Home Rule legislation. Massachusetts voters passed the proposal in 1966 and the changes became effective in 1967.

The Home Rule Amendment took state sovereign power and essentially shared it in three key areas: (1) the granting of charter-making authority; (2) the granting of general legislative power; and (3) the establishment of the doctrine of "Fair Play" between municipalities and the Legislature.

Revised Home Rule powers and how they are to be exercised by municipalities were established under the Home Rule Procedures Act (M.G.L. Chapter 43B), subject to standards and procedures as the General Court may establish under law. These set forth the "rules of the road" when a city or town seeks to exercise its Home Rule powers. Municipalities need to be aware of this act's existence and be sure to review its dictates before undertaking such things like a charter change.

The Town of Andover's governing charter, enacted by the Legislature in 1956, was amended in 1974. The Town conducted studies of its governance and potential amendments to the charter in the 1980's and most recently in 2002. In each instance, the committee undertaking such study recommended retaining Andover's Open Town Meeting – Select Board – Town Manager form of government.

In summary, the Town is overseen by an elected five-member Select Board and is administered by an appointed, professional Town Manager who also oversees approximately 20 departments and divisions. Andover's public schools are overseen by an elected five-member School Committee, and administered by an appointed, professional Superintendent. All members of the Select Board and School Committee are elected at-large.

There are also various appointed boards and committees[3] which have specific responsibilities, some mandated by State law, concerning various aspects of town governance. Town Meeting, which is generally unique to New England, serves as Andover's legislative body. It offers all registered voters of the community the opportunity to participate in the major decisions of the Town. Town Meeting is facilitated by an elected Town Moderator who also is responsible for appointing a nine-member Finance Committee, which in turn is responsible for advising Town Meeting on financial matters brought before it.

B. Summary of Andover's Population, Geography, Economy, and Culture

At 32.1 square miles, and home to over 36,000 residents, Andover is one of the largest towns in Massachusetts, and has the highest elevation of any community in Essex County (550 feet on Holt Hill). Located in the center of the Merrimack Valley, Andover is 23 miles north of Boston, is bordered on the north by the cities of Lawrence and Methuen, on the east by the town of North Andover, on the south by the towns of North Reading and Wilmington, and on the west by the towns of Tewksbury and Dracut.

[3] Throughout this Report, Andover's various boards, committees, commissions, and task forces may be referred to in short-hand as boards and/or committees. This is meant to economize space, and not to disrespect each bodies' unique title.

Like many New England towns and cities, much of Andover's early history and development flowed from its rivers: the Merrimack and Shawsheen. Mills and factories were built in the 1800's and provided significant employment and related commercial and residential activity that shaped the development of the town. More recently, Andover is witnessing a tremendous interest in re-purposing many of those old mill buildings into productive and innovative uses. Andover voters took a major step forward at the 2020 Annual Town Meeting by overwhelmingly endorsing a process for redeveloping the now-vacant town yard into a mixed-use development area that will serve as a catalyst for considerable new multi-use activity in the Historic Mill District.

Andover has benefitted from forward thinking and creative leadership for well over a half-century. A key example dates back to the late-1950s, when the interstate highway system was exploding across the nation and I-93 and I-495 were being laid out through Andover, which at that time was filled with residents, farms and rural land. Our Town leaders had the wisdom and vision to foresee how the automobile would transform our community and pushed to establish commercial and industrial zoning along the I-93 corridor and install town water and sewer systems to serve those parcels of land. Skeptics called those "sewers to nowhere," but very quickly they were the catalyst for Raytheon, the IRS and all the development along River Road that provides a significant portion of Andover's tax base and quality employment for thousands of Andover and regional residents.

As of early 2020, Andover ranks in the top 25 of all employment hub communities in Massachusetts. About 50% of all Andover-based employment is in the service industries (e.g., professional, scientific, healthcare, education, information technology, and finance), 16% in manufacturing, and the balance in public service, retail, hospitality, construction and other. Approximately 66% of Andover residents employed in Andover and elsewhere work in management, business, science and arts occupations, 19 % in sales and office occupations and 8% in service fields.

With excellent access to interstate highways (I-93 and I-495), in addition to several daily commuter rail trains to Boston, many Andover residents commute to Boston at least some days and work remotely other days. The Merrimack Valley Transit Regional Authority provides local bus service connecting Andover neighborhoods to neighboring communities and daily trips to Boston.

Nearly 5,600 students attend Andover public schools, which include six elementary (2,500 students), three middle (1,400 students) and one high school (1,700 students). The district is highly regarded within Massachusetts with a high-performing academic curriculum, yet it faces many of the same stresses as other districts with enrollment fluctuations due to Covid-19, new State and federal government mandates and need for expanded facilities and technology.

Phillips Academy, located in Andover and founded in 1778, is often ranked the top coeducational independent preparatory high school in the United States. Serving more than 1,000

day and boarding students from nearly all 50 states and many nations, P.A. as it's called, is a vibrant part of the Andover community. The Academy is also home to the Addison Gallery of American Art, which holds over 16,000 pieces of American art from the 1800s to the present, and the Peabody Institute of Archaeology, founded to promote archeological research and the appreciation of Native American cultures.

Merrimack College, a co-educational college officially located in North Andover with facilities in Andover educates over 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students both on campus and online and is an integral part of the community. Massachusetts School of Law is also located in Andover and offers an academically rigorous, affordable legal education emphasizing ethics, advocacy, leadership, and professional skills.

The chart provided in Appendix 1 compares Andover to 10 peer communities north and west of Boston that residents or businesses often consider when choosing where to live or build their business. This data is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts, which was updated as of October 2021. Some of the salient points are:

- After Arlington, Andover is the second largest of all the peer communities with a population of 36,569 Andover's population grew by 10.1 percent from 2010 to 2020, second in growth rate only to Needham. A 2013 report, "The Future of Andover, Massachusetts: Demographic Change, Housing and Economic Prospects," projected that the 2020 population would be 34,002 and that by 2030 Andover's population would reach 35,579. The 2030 projection was exceeded in 2020.
- Twenty-four percent of Andover's population is under 18, consistent with its peer communities but significantly more than the statewide average of 19.6%. A young population generally indicates that the community has good schools and a quality of life that attracts young families. This of course means hefty school budgets.
- Just under 15 percent of Andover's population is over 65, slightly less than most of its peer communities and the statewide average of 17.0%. Local data suggests, however, that the percent of Andover's population over 65 will grow steadily over the next decade.
- The racial composition of Andover is slightly more white than the Commonwealth as a whole but less white than many of the peer communities. Seventy-five-point eight percent of Andover self-identifies as white, compared to 71.1 % statewide. Among peer communities, Lexington is the least white at 62.7 % while Reading is the whitest at 91.1%.
- Those residents self-identifying as Black amount to 2.7% of Andover's residents; Asian 14.7% and Hispanic/Latino 4.9%.
- A sizeable portion of Andover and its peer communities' residents were born outside of the United States and/or speak a language other than English in the home. Seventeen point four percent of Andover residents were born out of the United States and, in 20.3% of Andover households, a language other than English is spoken. This data is consistent with other peer communities. North Andover and Reading have the smallest percent of residents born outside the United States.

- Seventy-four percent of Andover adults have a bachelor's degree or higher, well above the statewide average of 43.7% and only slightly below the leading communities. Over 33% of Andover residents have a graduate degree. (State-wide data is not readily available.)
- The median household income in Andover is $151,344, nearly double the Massachusetts average, placing Andover in the top 20 of all Massachusetts communities.

Section 4 – Committee Charge

The Committee was created by a unanimous vote of the Select Board in April 2019. This vote was taken at the recommendation of the Town Manager.

Two principal factors motivated the creation of the Committee. First, Town Meeting had for several years considered private warrant articles suggesting piecemeal, targeted reforms to Andover's government. For example, some residents had suggested making Planning Board members elected rather than appointed. The Select Board believed that governance should be changed following a holistic study and review and should not be reactive to one-off requests.

The second factor was that a comprehensive review of Andover's governance had not been undertaken since 2002. Similar reviews had been launched in the 1980s and the 1970s. Therefore, it was decided, the community was due for another review.

The Committee's charter reads as follows:

"The Town Governance Study Committee shall be charged with studying, and proposing beneficial amendments to the town's charter, bylaws, and governing practices as they relate to Andover's form of government and governance.

The Committee shall:

- Study the town's form of government and governance.
- Examine models of government in comparable communities.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in Andover's current government, and recommend any amendments to the charter, by-laws, and governing practices so as to improve the town's form of government and governance.
- Facilitate public engagement on, and the public's discussion of, the Committee's work.

Upon completion of its work, the Committee shall submit to the Town Manager and the Select Board a summary of its findings and any recommended amendments to the charter, bylaws, and governing practices.

The Committee will be composed of (1) nine residents appointed by the Town Manager per Article III § 2(b)(2) of the General Bylaws, and (2) two ex-officio members: the Town Clerk and the Town Moderator.[4] The Committee shall elect a chair and vice chair from among its members."

[4] The Committee was initially populated with nine at-large members, the Town Clerk, and the Town Moderator. During the years of the Committee's work, several changes in Committee membership occurred: Paul Cavicci resigned for personal reasons; Paula-Colby-Clements became a non-voting liaison as a member of the Finance Committee; Austin Simko, upon leaving his position as Town Clerk, was appointed to an at-large seat on the Committee; and the Moderator resigned in the fall of 2021.

Section 5. Summary of Committee's Deliberative Process

At its first meeting on September 25, 2019, the Town Governance Study Committee outlined a four-phase approach to its study. This tiered deliberative approach included the following phases: (1) identification of governance issues to explore, (2) study of the issues with public engagement, (3) formulation of recommendations, and (4) advising the Select Board and Town Meeting regarding implementation of the recommendations.

A. Phase I – Identification of Study Issues

The Committee began its Phase I identification of governance issues in October of 2019 and concluded this phase of work in January of 2020. The focus of this work was on gathering as much input as possible from various stakeholders so that the Committee would have an as complete as possible understanding of community thoughts on the Town's governance.

The Committee hosted three listening sessions over the course of two months at unique days, times, and venues to accommodate residents' different schedules. Those dates and locations were as follows:

- Saturday, November 16, 2019[5]; 9:30-11:00 a.m. at the Old Town Hall
- Wednesday, November 20, 2019 ; 7:00-8:30 p.m. at the Public Safety Center Auditorium
- Wednesday, December 11, 2019 ; 9:00-10:30 a.m. in the Memorial Hall Library

In conducting these listening sessions, the Committee members provided a brief 10-minute overview of what constitutes governance. The Committee, through its chair and the Town Clerk, asked residents to reflect and comment on the following questions:

- How would you like to interact with your local government?
- Is Andover's government: Transparent? Accessible? Representative? Effective? Efficient? Accountable?
- Do you vote at Town Meeting and in local elections? Why?
- What is working well with Andover's governance?
- What is not working well with Andover's governance?

Residents responded to these prompts and made comments on various topics. Committee members listened and took notes, speaking only to clarify what residents chose to share.

In tandem with these listening sessions, the Committee interviewed the Town Manager, Superintendent of Schools, each member of the Select Board, and the chairs of the Board of

[5] Links to some of the recorded Committee meetings are provided by hyperlinks throughout this report. A central archive of all Committee and subcommittee meeting recordings is provided in Appendix 6.

Assessors, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Council on Aging, Planning Board, Finance Committee, School Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, Audit Committee, Permanent Town Building Advisory Committee, and Preservation Commission. Further, the Committee invited to a forum discussion the chairs of the other Town boards and committees.

In interviewing these individuals, the Committee asked the following questions:

Board Purpose:

- Could you describe your board's relationship to the mission of the Town of Andover?
- How does your board relate to other boards in performing your tasks?
- What about your board's work makes you proud?

Communication:

- How does communication work within the board, through the Town hierarchy, and in the community at-large?
- Are there areas where communication is particularly smooth or particularly frustrating? If either, why?
- Are there ways you think that communication could be improved? If so, how?

Town Governance:

- What is working well with the current structure of the Town government?
- What is not working well with the current structure of the Town government?
- Is the Town government *representative* of the residents of Andover?
- Is the Town government *transparent* to the residents of Andover?
- Is the Town government *accessible* to the residents of Andover?
- Is the Town government *accountable* to the residents of Andover?
- Is the Town government *effective* for the residents of Andover?
- Is the Town government *efficient*?
- Is Town Meeting sensitive to the needs of your board and is it timely in taking action?
- Is Town Meeting reasonably and appropriately functioning as the Town's legislative body?
- Are there provisions of the charter or bylaws that should be reviewed or reformed?

The Future:

- What emerging patterns or issues do you see in your work that you believe are important?
- What are barriers to the success of your board?
- What single change or action would you take to make Andover a better place to live?

Beyond this outreach, the Committee built a series of user-friendly webpages (see https://andoverma.gov/792/Town-Governance-Study-Committee) that provided information to residents about the Committee's approach and invited resident input in the form of emails or

comments made through the website. Further, the Committee solicited and received public comment at its regular Committee meetings.

Between November of 2019 and February of 2020, the Town surveyed residents on a wide range of subjects relative to the state of the municipality. Over 1,000 responses were received. This scientific survey was crafted, distributed, and analyzed by the University of Massachusetts Lowell Center for Public Opinion. The governance-related questions on this survey included the following:

- How often do you rely on [various media and social media] sources to obtain Town of Andover related news and information?
- In the last 12 months, about how many times have you participated in [various types of] civic/community activities in Andover?
- Have you attended any Andover Annual or Special Town Meetings within the last three years?
- Do you have any suggestions on how the Town of Andover could improve the conduct of its Town Meetings?
- Could you please tell us why you have not attended any Andover Town Meetings within the last three years?
- What is the most important challenge facing Andover over the next five years?

The survey results pertaining to governance were made available to and studied by the Committee. See Appendix 2.

Having gathered this enormous quantity of public opinion, the Committee then devoted January 2020 to sorting through the information to identify governance issues to be studied and sequencing the order in which these issues would be studied. During a Saturday meeting on January 11, 2020, the Committee met to share recollections and notes from each member on what issues were heard from residents in the preceding months. Every member of the Committee shared his or her respective list of issues during a lengthy series of presentations.

At the conclusion of this discussion, the Clerk of the Committee compiled all of the presented issues into a master list of 88 potential study topics. This list was culled to remove duplicates, and issues were categorized under general topics. The master list was then distributed to the Committee members, who reflected on its contents for several weeks.

On January 30, 2020, the Committee convened to discuss the items on the master list and decide which to study and in what sequence. In discussing each potential study topic, the Committee classified each issue as being a Charter amendment, Bylaw amendment, policy amendment, governance practice, or administrative operation.

The Committee robustly discussed each issue and then arrived at an unanticipated conclusion: the “form of government” issue had to be evaluated first in order to adequately study other and

derivative issues. For example, potential reforms regarding the Finance Committee would depend on whether the Finance Committee would operate in support of a Town Meeting, or whether it would be a mere subcommittee within a Town Council.

Having arrived at this conclusion, the Committee decided to begin its study with the Town's form of government and then, at the conclusion of that analysis, return to its master list of issues to decide which remaining issues warranted study and in what order.

On February 10, 2020, the Committee, through the chair and Town Clerk, presented an update to the Select Board on its Phase I work and its plan to begin the Committee's Phase II with a study of Andover's form of government.

B. Phase II – Study of Identified Issues

i. Form of Government

The following provides a cursory accounting of how the Committee approached its form of government study. The necessarily short descriptions cannot capture nuanced conversations involving Committee members, the Committee's consultants, residents, and other contributing stakeholders. The meeting minutes are available at the Committee's webpage (see https://andoverma.gov/792/Town-Governance-Study-Committee) and provide an in-depth report of the relevant discussions.

Also, importantly, this section of the report focuses solely on the Committee's process, and not its decisions or the reasoning underpinning those decisions. Readers should refer to the Executive Summary, see page 4, and Section 7, see page 30, for a substantive accounting of the Committee's work.

On February 26, 2020, the Committee received a presentation from Community Paradigm Associates, the Committee's consultant, on the various forms of government found in Massachusetts municipalities. This presentation included information regarding the Massachusetts Home Rule Act, four forms of government (i.e., Open Town Meeting, Representative Town Meeting, Council-Manager, and Council-Mayor), the prevalence of the various forms, and the tradeoffs associated with the various forms. The Committee also discussed the additional data needed and assigned several members to assemble that data in the coming weeks and months.

The COVID-19 epidemic struck Andover in March of 2020. The Committee did not meet during this month but resumed holding regular, televised, and live-streamed meetings remotely in April 2020.

On April 15, 2020, the Committee received a comprehensive report from Community Paradigm Associates about the various forms of government in Massachusetts. It also received a presentation from Committee Clerk Andrew McBrien that explored various quantitative characteristics of every community in Massachusetts to determine whether there was any relationship between any of a given community's characteristics and its form of government.

On May 20, 2020, the Committee received a presentation from Committee member and Town Clerk Austin Simko regarding governance-related insights yielded by a 2019-2020 public opinion survey of Andover residents. This survey was initiated by the Select Board and drafted and analyzed by the University of Massachusetts Lowell Center for Public Opinion. Notable topics included the frequency with which residents attend board and committee meetings or watch them on TV, Town Meeting attendance, the reasons why residents do not attend Town Meeting, suggestions for the improvement of Town Meeting, and opinions on the biggest challenges facing the community in the next five years. The Committee also received a detailed presentation of quantitative and qualitative data from Mr. McBrien. These data covered trends in Town Meeting participation, attendance, geographical representativeness, et cetera, in extensive detail for every annual and special town meeting between 1993 and 2019, as well as local election turnout for the same period.

On June 29, 2020, the Committee assessed the research collected and, for the first time, shared initial judgments on which form of government would provide Andover with a governance model that was transparent, accessible, accountable, efficient, effective, and representative. Through about 90 minutes of conversation, during which each Committee member made an uninterrupted statement, followed by free and open dialogue amongst all Committee members, all 10 Committee members stated a preference for retaining and where possible reforming Open Town Meeting. Some expressed unalloyed enthusiasm for Open Town Meeting, while others articulated a preference to retain Open Town Meeting, on balance, given that this form of government fits with Andover's history and culture.

With this unanimous support of Open Town Meeting, with reforms, the Committee established subcommittees to study what reforms might be legal and effective. This investigation would be necessary because a decision to retain and reform Open Town Meeting relied on a basic understanding of what reforms could be enacted to improve the efficiency and accessibility of Open Town Meeting. The Committee formed five subcommittees for the purpose of studying the following categories of reforms:

i. Town Meeting Public Engagement
ii. Electronic Voting at Town Meeting
iii. Town Meeting Time and Location
iv. Town Meeting Efficiency
v. Miscellaneous Town Meeting Reforms

Over the course of several months, between July 2020 and March 2021, these five subcommittees met a total of 19 times. They considered myriad reforms, discarding some as infeasible, illegal, or imprudent, and recommending other reforms for consideration by the full Committee. (As is explained below, the Committee, and its subcommittees, revisited these reforms later in 2021 once the decision recommend retaining Open Town Meeting had been definitively settled.)

On August 20, 2020 , each subcommittee presented its recommendation to the full Committee. Committee members were able to ask clarifying questions and state initial reactions to some of the reforms.

On September 30, 2020, the Committee again heard presentations from each of the five subcommittees and was able to delve further into the merits of each reform.
No final determinations were made at that meeting regarding potential reforms.

On October 27, 2020, the Committee paused its consideration of Open Town Meeting reforms and revisited the fundamental decision of whether to retain Open Town Meeting, or shift to an entirely distinct form of government. The chair reiterated the Committee's form of government "working hypothesis," as articulated at the previous June meeting. That hypothesis posited that a Council-Mayor form of government is not favored; a Representative Town Meeting form of government is not favored; a Council-Manager form of government is not preferred but deserving of further analysis as the strongest alternative to Open Town Meeting; and an Open Town Meeting form of government with reforms is favored.

Community Paradigm Associates provided a detailed presentation on the merits of council-manager forms of government. Committee members asked questions and made comments. The presentation was an objective assessment of this form of government – the presenting consultants had direct experience with council-manager communities and articulated the benefits of this form of government.

Having reached a working hypothesis in favor of retaining Open Town Meeting, studied potential reforms, and revisited Council-Manager as the strongest alternative to Open Town Meeting, the Committee decided to organize a series of public forums where this research could be presented to residents and where residents could comment and pose questions. While public comments had been welcomed at nearly every meeting of the Committee, these virtual forums would allow for enhanced public dialogue stimulated by the Committee's most current research and its working hypothesis.

A forum-planning subcommittee was formed and met three times to schedule the forums, plan for informed and open dialogue, and prepare a presentation to be delivered at each forum as background information for participating residents. Three virtual forums were held on Wednesday December 10, 2020 at 7:30pm; Saturday, January 9, 2021 at 10:00am; and Tuesday,

January 12, 2021 at 7:00pm. Dozens of residents attended the virtual forums, asked questions, and offered both oral and written comments that were noted by members of the Committee.

In an effort to solicit further public feedback, and in recognition that some residents may have been unable attend one of the three most recent forums, the Committee solicited and invited written comments from stakeholders. A solicitation was shared on the Town's website and various social media platforms, with various faith communities, through the Andover Center for History and Culture, the Elder Services monthly newsletter, Memorial Hall Library's weekly email blast to more than 13,000 residents, with the Town-wide PTO, and with reports from The Andover Townsman, The Eagle-Tribune, and The Patch. A member of the Committee also spoke at a meeting of the Rotary Club to invite comments from Rotary members.

At this point in its form of government study, the Committee decided to engage in an "advocacy exercise" to test the working hypothesis that a reformed Open Town Meeting is preferable to the strongest alternative, a Council-Manager form of government. This exercise was held on February 8, 2021, broadcast live on Andover TV, live-streamed on Andover TV.org, and posted for subsequent viewing on the Committee's website.

Through role-playing, the Committee was able to comprehensively and incisively compare the two forms of government under consideration (i.e., Open Town Meeting and Council-Manager). One Committee member was assigned to act as the zealous advocate in favor of Open Town Meeting (with potential reforms). Another Committee member was tasked with acting as the zealous advocate for Council-Manager. Both advocates drew on all the Committee's research and received public comment to make the most powerful argument in favor of their form of government. The advocates set aside their personal feelings and presented their assigned forms of government in the strongest light.

After providing their initial arguments, each advocate was provided up to five minutes to offer rebuttals and clarifications on their forms. Committee members were then allowed about an hour to ask questions of the advocates. The questions were posed for the purpose of helping the Committee member better understand these forms and the tradeoffs that the Committee's ultimate decision would inevitably entail.

This exercise was not a debate, and no advocate was graded on style points. Indeed, the Committee did not offer any grades at all. The exercise allowed the Committee to flesh out complex topics and to provide for direct comparison between the two forms of government.

The Committee next convened on February 22, 2021 to deliberate and reach a final decision on a preferred form of government. Having completed 13 months of research, conducted multiple public forums, solicited written feedback, and engaged in a capstone advocacy exercise, the Committee members came to the final deliberation with extensive information. After much reflection, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend retention of Open Town Meeting with appropriate reforms.

Between March and May of 2021, the Committee revived its five subcommittees to thoroughly and intensively study potential reforms to Andover's Open Town Meeting form of government.

Dozens of reforms were proposed and studied. The subcommittees presented their respective reform recommendations to the Committee over several meetings. The Committee discussed, questioned, and approved reforms proposed by the subcommittees.[6] Importantly, while the intensive study and votes on various reforms occurred during these spring 2021 meetings, the subcommittees had initially convened and begun their studying in the fall of 2020 to give the Committee a sense of what endorsing "Open Town Meeting reforms" might look like in practice.

On May 3, 2021, the Committee presented an update to the Select Board on the Committee's process, form of government decision, and recommended reforms to Open Town Meeting. This update was presented at a public meeting consistent with the requirements of Open Meeting laws.

ii. Secondary Study Topics.

In May 2021, the Committee commenced its study of non-form of government study topics. These topics had been identified in January 2020 but postponed for consideration until the fundamental form of government question had been settled. Looking at the issues identified in January 2020, and adding additional study topics flagged since then, the Committee categorized and consolidated the study topics deserving investigation. The topics were placed into tiers as follows:

For Tier One, a subcommittee was formed to study committee appointments, existence, structure, etc. A second subcommittee was formed to study communications in general. These broad topics were studied, presented on, and decided by the Committee in May and June 2021.

For Tier Two, individual Committee members studied and presented to the full Committee on the following topics:

- Long-term and Strategic Financial Planning
- Government Business Process
- Changing the Date of Annual Town Elections
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Town Manager Residency Requirement
- Ranked-Choice Voting
- Recall of Elected Officials

[6] The reforms approved by the Committee are discussed in detail in Section 7 of the report. For an accounting of the reforms not endorsed by the Committee, readers can consult the minutes on the Committee's webpages (see https://andoverma.gov/792/Town-Governance-Study-Committee).

The Committee came to conclusions regarding each of these topics in July-October 2021.

The assignment of topics to tiers did not imply any relative importance or priority of the topics. The assignment was driven entirely by a desire to organize topics into groups that logically should be considered at the same time.

C. Phase III – Issue Recommendations

This report represents the Committee's formal issuance of recommendations to the Select Board and the Town Manager. The Committee has made itself available to discuss these recommendations with the Select Board and to answer questions about the process and conclusions encompassed in this report.

D. Phase IV – Advise Select Board and Town Meeting

Between December 2021 and January 2022, the Select Board will evaluate the Committee's recommendations and decide which recommendations merit action, including action taken by Town Meeting through warrant articles. The Committee stands ready to advise the Select Board and, where appropriate, Town Meeting, on the reasonings behind proffered recommendations.

Of course, many of the Committee's recommendations do not require Town Meeting approval and can instead be implemented by the Select Board, other public bodies, and/or the Town Administration. Also, there is no requirement that Town Meeting approvals be sought at the spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting. The sequence and pace of adopting recommendations is at the discretion of the various stakeholders. Consistent with the appointments of Committee members, the Committee will no longer be available to advise the Select Board and Town Meeting after August 31, 2022.

Section 6. Issues to be Considered in the Future, and Issues Not Considered

In addition to the dozens of topics the Committee researched, discussed, debated, and acted upon highlighted in this report, there were a few other topics where the Committee felt there was insufficient evidence or support for recommending any position. The following accounts for the most significant of these topics:

Vigorously monitor and consider supporting efforts to change State law to permit towns to offer fully remote voting at Open Town Meetings

Throughout its deliberative process, the Committee tried to think in a creative, and innovative, yet practical way in assessing which proposals were best for Andover. Nearly three-fourths of our deliberations were conducted remotely due to Covid-19. Like nearly every other organization, Andover had to completely convert its decision-making and public input-taking to a remote model. This presented numerous logistical, technical, financial, and privacy issues; it also opened the door to more efficient and effective methods of decision-making.

Electronic *in-person* voting at Town Meeting was studied by the Committee and its adoption is recommended. A more revolutionary reform step would be to permit *remote* electronic voting by residents from home or wherever they may be on the date and time of a Town Meeting. This capability would require changes to State law, and the situation is rapidly evolving. The State Municipalities and Regional Governments Committee voted in early 2020 not to authorize it at that time because they want to be assured that, if it were to be authorized, all communities would be able to implement it. Similarly, Senator Rausch introduced a bill (S1356), with four co-sponsors, to authorize remote participation in Open Town Meeting during the COVID-19 emergency. An identical bill was filed in the House by seven representatives. Both bills were endorsed by the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Governments in June 2021 and are now before the Senate Committee on Ways and Means for further review. The Town of Wayland has been actively soliciting other communities to join them as they lobby the State Legislature to drive this change. The Committee strongly feels that Andover should be active in examining this potentially game-changing reform of Town Meeting. Many residents already conduct much of their banking, investment, medical, and other personal transactions through secure two- or multi-factor authentication systems. Town Meeting voting will most likely follow this paradigm shift in the future.

Support policy that Town governance be reviewed at some specified frequency

The question is whether the Town should adopt a formal policy that Town governance be reviewed at some specified frequency, and whether such a policy should be formalized as a

change to the Charter or as a Bylaw. Most Committee members expressed a view on this, with the following common themes:

- It is not possible to predict when a new review would be needed. Changes in circumstances dictate when a review should take place, not a pre-ordained timescale.
- The Select Board can empanel a committee at any time to conduct a new review, and residents can petition the Select Board at any time to do so. A formulaic approach is not required. Indeed, it was felt that the Town and/or Select Board will "know that the time is right".
- However, it is important to note that the Committee does not believe that any conclusions we offer are definitive in perpetuity. The Committee considers this current study to have been a healthy exercise and should be repeated periodically.

Section 7. The Committee's Recommendations

The Committee's recommendations fall into three categories:

A. Form of Government recommendations
B. Tier One Secondary Governance recommendations
C. Tier Two Secondary Governance recommendations

This categorization of topics reflects the order in which the Committee considered issues and not any weighting of the relative importance of topics. Issues were sequenced for consideration carefully for efficiency and so that derivative topics were studied after non-derivative topics, thus ensuring that no decisions would be rendered obsolete by subsequent discussions or decisions.

A. Form of Government.

i. Introduction.

"Form of government" refers to the essential framework on which a municipality's governance rests. Massachusetts towns and cities, with myriad variations, employ four basic forms of government.

Massachusetts local government has a long and rich history, beginning with the settling of Plimouth Plantation in the early 17th Century. In that nascent local government, Town Meeting, a Moderator, a Town Clerk, and a Board of Selectmen[7] provided governing direction to the community. In the intervening 400 years, local government has grown in complexity, scale, function, and expectation.

Some communities follow the Open Town Meeting form of government, unique to New England, wherein any registered voter can speak at, vote in, and sponsor legislation (in accordance with State law). A Select Board and Town Manager appointed by the Select Board form the executive authority under this form of government in Andover.

Other communities adhere to the Representative Town Meeting form of government, wherein elected Town Meeting representatives, and not all registered voters, vote in Town Meeting sessions. A Select Board and Town Manager form the executive authority under this form of government.

In the Council-Manager form of government, a council acts as the legislature and a professional manager acts as chief executive officer. As the legislative body, the council is empowered to

[7] This was the term used historically.

approve zoning changes, general bylaws, operating and capital budgets, et cetera. In this system, the professional chief executive serves at the pleasure of the elected council members.

Some communities follow the Council-Mayor form of government, wherein a council acts as the legislature and an elected mayor acts as chief executive officer. As the communities' legislative body, the council is empowered to approve zoning changes, general bylaws, operating and capital budgets, et cetera. This is commonly understood as a "city" form of government.

The following is a snap-shot of how these forms of government compare:

Essential Features of Forms of Government

Open Town Meeting	Representative Town Meeting	Council-Manager	Council-Mayor
Town Meeting passes legislation, budgets, zoning	**Town Meeting** passes legislation, budgets, zoning	**Council** passes legislation, budgets, zoning	**Council** passes legislation, budgets, zoning
Meets once or twice each year	Meets once or twice each year	Meets once or twice each month	Meets once or twice each month
Voters represent themselves • Voters may speak at Town Meeting • Voters vote • Voters may introduce legislation	**Elected** Town Meeting members represent voters • Voters may speak at Town Meeting • Representatives vote • Voters may introduce legislation	**Elected** councilors represent voters • Voters may speak at Council meetings • Councilors vote • Councilors typically introduce legislation	**Elected** councilors represent voters • Voters may speak at Council meetings • Councilors vote • Councilors typically introduce legislation
Select Board makes executive policy decisions	**Select Board** makes executive policy decisions	**Town Manager** makes executive policy decisions	**Mayor** makes executive policy decisions
Professional Town Manager manages operations	**Professional Town Manager** manages operations	**Professional Town Manager** manages operations	**Elected Mayor** manages operations
Most common form of government in Mass.	*Less common form of government in Mass.*	*Used in about half of US communities outside New England*	*Used in about half of US communities outside New England*

Each form of government has community-specific variations. Without disregarding this rich variety and the complex implications of even minor governance differences, the following is a rough accounting of the "pros" and "cons" associated with the four forms of government.

Benefits & Detriments of Forms of Government

Open Town Meeting	Representative Town Meeting	Council-Manager	Council-Mayor
+ Strongest voice & most control for residents + Residents can sponsor "legislation" + Maximum legislative transparency + Town administration must persuade whole community	+ Voters have representatives to act on their behalf + Requires less voter effort + Requires less administrative effort + Voters cannot vote on their own behalf	+ Voters represented in the council + Requires less voter effort + Requires less administrative effort + Agile + Efficient	+ Voters represented in the council + Requires less voter effort + Requires less administrative effort + Agile + Efficient
- Least agile option - Not efficient - Requires most voter effort - Requires most administrative effort - Sometimes uninformed "legislators"	- Not agile - Not efficient - Potential for uncontested rep. elections, unfilled rep. seats, & rep. absenteeism - Voters have representatives to act on their behalf - Requires less voter effort	- Only elected councilors can vote on legislation – not participatory - Big decisions (e.g., budget, zoning) an "insider's process" - Council elections may be uncontested	- Only elected councilors can vote on legislation – not participatory - Big decisions (e.g., budget, zoning) an "insider's process" - Council elections may be uncontested - Executive elected & may be inexperienced

Massachusetts is comprised of 351 municipalities. Of these, 292 are towns. 259 of the towns utilize Open Town Meeting and 33 have Representative Town Meeting. The remaining 59 municipalities have a city form of government: council-manager in 15 and council-mayor in 44.

In total, 274 municipalities have professional management (i.e., cities under a council-manager form of government and all towns). Twenty towns have converted from a town to city form of government since 1980. None have converted to Representative Town Meeting since 1989. For more information about forms of government, see Appendix 3.

ii. The Rationale for Retaining Open Town Meeting.

In considering whether to recommend affirmation of the current Open Town Meeting form of government or adoption of a different form of government, the Committee studied the reasons that other communities have considered when approving the significant step of altering their form of government. Understanding these typical rationales for change gave the Committee a "standard of review" for making this difficult determination.

Communities do not change their form of government lightly.[8] They typically do so only in response to widespread public opinion demanding a change in response to serious systemic defects in government. These rationales for change have typically included the following:

1. Political infighting – Where a divided community cannot make decisions necessary to its governance.
2. Rapid growth and other changes – Where a community finds itself unable to react to changing conditions and/or demographics, often due to an antiquated governing structure.
3. Sub-optimal services – Where the residents are substantially unsatisfied with Town services.
4. Economic stagnation – Where tax revenue is lagging because the community is lacking economic health.
5. Legal suits between government bodies – Where the local government is in conflict with itself.
6. Inability to attract candidates/appointees to public office – Where residents are not stepping forward to fill volunteer leadership roles.
7. Town Meeting defects – Where low attendance, uneven representation, and unwise decisions mar a community's Town Meeting.

Almost all of these above rationales for change are inapplicable to Andover. While political conflict is present, it is not debilitating; and some conflict is unavoidable and healthy to a community. Andover is now growing slowly and evolving demographically, and its government has proven to be pro-active in meeting conditions that are changing. As is evidenced by the 2019 UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion resident survey, residents are generally pleased with Town services. Economic stagnation is not present, as economic growth has exceeded predictions in recent years. The government of Andover is not engaged in legal suits against itself. And the community boasts a talented and thriving pool of volunteer leaders. The

[8] Please see Appendix 3 for an accounting of which communities have recently changed their forms of government.

prodigious number of applications from residents to serve on recently-established committees such as this Committee, the Town Yard Selection Committee, and the Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion reflect a healthy tradition of civic volunteerism in Andover.

The final rationale, that Town Meeting is defective and obsolete, occupied an enormous amount of the Committee's focus. While Andover's Open Town Meeting was found to be healthy compared to other communities, the Committee recognized certain areas for improvement. These enhancements are explained further below.

In general, the Committee found no broad public demand for a change in Andover's form of government, and, relatedly, that the rationales typically attendant to form of government change are not present in Andover. Further, while several residents expressed frustration with the current Open Town Meeting format, there was no consensus on what alternatives were preferred.[9] This was important context for the Committee as it considered alternative forms of government, for the Committee appreciated that changes in form of government can be destabilizing, confusing to residents, difficult to calibrate, and potentially generative of unintended effects on a community's policy and culture.

The Committee unanimously agreed that the community is best served by retaining Open Town Meeting and adopting several enhancements that aim to improve Andover's Town Meeting. The Committee supports its recommendation to retain Open Town Meeting based on the following "pillars" which, together, reflect Andover's established and historically effective governing and civic culture.

1. **Open Town Meeting allows for direct legislative participation by any registered voter.** This system of government, unique in the entire country to the local level of government and to New England, gives voters the ability to sponsor legislation, debate, and vote without any intermediary agent. This power is enormous and not to be discarded lightly.

2. **Open Town Meeting draws on the ideas, perspectives, and votes of hundreds of residents, benefiting from the "wisdom of the crowd" effect**. While individuals and even governing boards can have blind spots, the totality of Town Meeting generally achieves a collective wisdom uncommon to smaller elected bodies.

3. **Open Town Meeting ensures that the Town's legislature operates with maximum transparency**. In Andover, debate occurs in the open and all registered voters are equally empowered to accept or reject legislation. An effect of this is that the Town's

[9] Some residents who provided written or oral feedback to the Committee sought enhancements to Open Town Meeting, while others recommended adoption of a Representative Town Meeting or Council-Manager form of government. These views, which are inconsistent with one another and did not reflect a consensus, were expressed within a range from adamant to tepid. Of course, many providing input supported the retention of Open Town Meeting.

administration and governing boards must persuade the entire community, from which the legislating residents emerge. It is not possible to "lobby" a small group to achieve an outcome. While some residents may feel that Andover's government is secretive or exclusionary, the Committee did not find that view to be widespread and in any case does not believe that a representative form of government, where the number of decision-makers is drastically lower, could bring increased transparency and inclusion.

4. **Open Town Meeting allows residents to represent themselves or to take comfort that hundreds of peer residents are representing the interests of the community in a way no representative government could.**

5. **Open Town Meeting is the most diverse, inclusive, and equitable legislature because the barriers to participation are lower than the barriers that exist in representative forms of government, where individuals must rely on agents to act on their behalf.** At a time of heightened awareness about who makes decisions, who is included, and whether outcomes are equitable, Open Town Meeting presents the best opportunity for impactful access as all residents have the opportunity to be heard and vote.

Standing together, these pillars support a governing and civic culture defined by decision-making by the whole community; residents who have ownership over the direction of the town; residents who can act as knowledgeable ambassadors to their peers who may not have the time or inclination to participate in Town Meeting; and a government checked and balanced by the residents.

The Committee received and considered closely input in which a number of residents expressed important concerns about Open Town Meeting. The Committee investigated these; the Committee's conclusions are summarized in the table below, then discussed in detail.

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Residents' Concern	Committee Conclusion
Other forms of government are more representative	No form of government has "cracked the code" on equally representing the population at large
Andover is too large for Open Town Meeting	All forms of government are used in communities with similar populations to Andover
Town Meeting attendance is low, and falling	A substantial proportion (i.e., 25%) of engaged voters (i.e., those who vote in Annual Town Elections) attend Town Meeting, and attendance is stable
Big decisions are made by a fraction of the community	Big decisions are made by a substantial portion (i.e., 25%) of engaged voters (i.e., those who vote in Annual Town Elections)
Votes at Town Meeting are "stacked" by special-interest groups	A large proportion of attendees at any Town Meeting are regular attendees
Votes at Open Town Meeting are dominated by "NIMBY" (Not In My Back Yard)	Open Town Meeting geographically represents Andover as a whole

No form of government has "cracked the code" on equally representing the population at large

Some contend that Open Town Meeting cannot be representative because some residents are unable to attend Town Meeting sessions. The Committee acknowledges that some residents do face insurmountable barriers to attendance (e.g., residents serving in the military who are on active deployment at the time of Town Meeting). However, the Committee found that no form of government has "cracked the code" on equally representing the population at large. Indeed, every available alternative to Open Town Meeting entails its own issues with respect to representation. These issues are elucidated in the respective sections of this report that describe why the Committee discounted each of the alternatives. In summary, the Committee concluded that changing form of government would not obviate representational issues and would in fact introduce problems about which the Committee had much greater concern.

All forms of government are used in communities with similar populations to Andover

The Committee compared the form of government used in each of the 351 municipalities in Massachusetts with their population, median household income, proportion of residents speaking a language other than English at home, physical area, and age distribution. The results of this analysis are presented in full and discussed in depth in Appendix 4.[10]

[10] These metrics provide a one-dimensional view of a municipality, and were studied purely to establish contextual background. The quantitative data were taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2013 Three-Year Estimate. This was the latest data set available at the time the study was conducted that included all parameters of interest. The form of government for each municipality was taken from the Massachusetts Municipal Directory for

The relationship between a community's population and its form of government is illustrated in Figure 1.

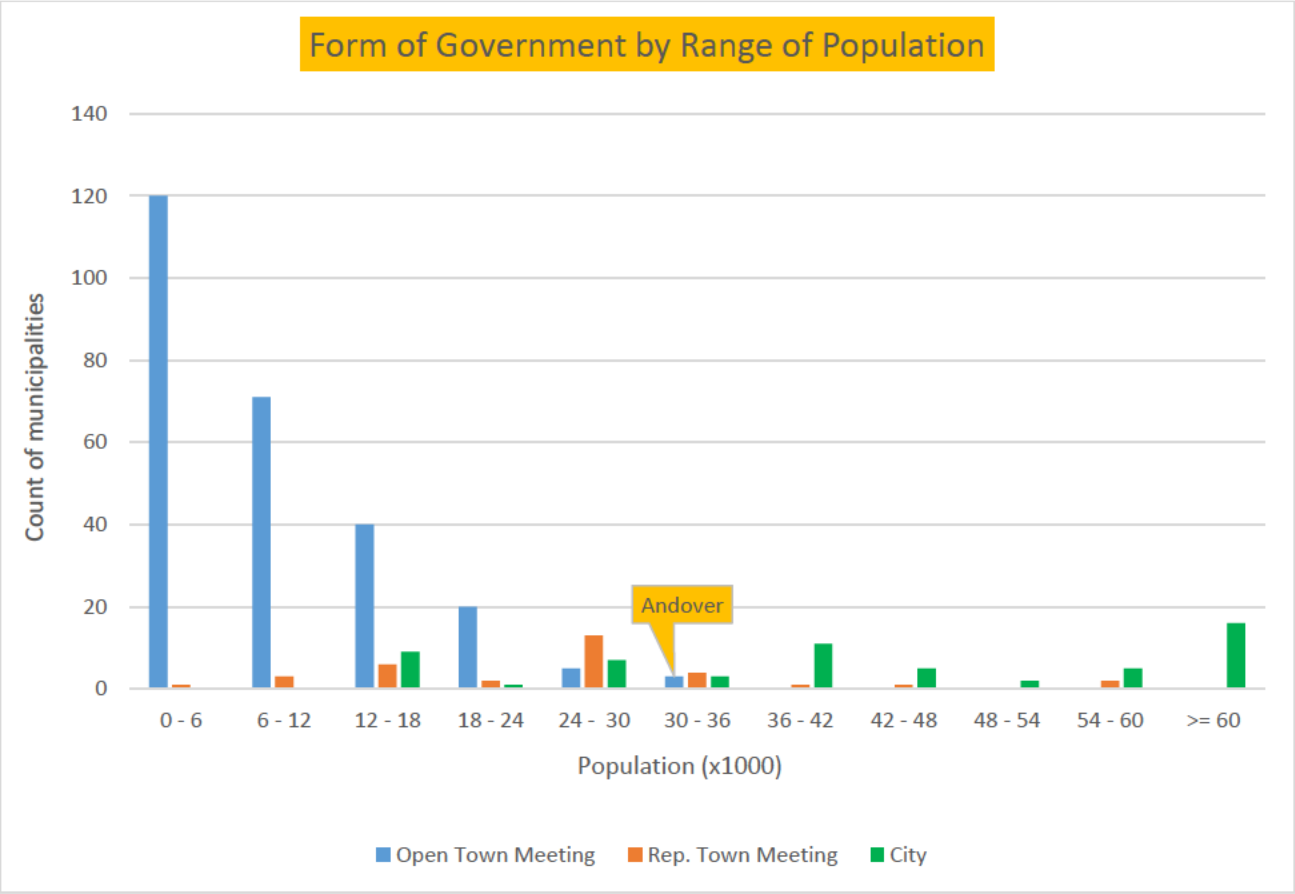


Figure 1 Number of municipalities with each form government, by population

Massachusetts law requires that any municipality with a population of 12,000 or less must be governed by Town Meeting. Those with populations up to 6,000 must have an *Open* Town Meeting.[11] Those between 6,000 and 12,000 may have either an Open or Representative Town Meeting, although 71 of the 74 have Open Town Meetings. As populations increase above 12,000 residents, the proportion of municipalities that use Open Town Meeting starts to decline as both Representative Town Meeting and city forms of government become more common. Representative Town Meeting is most prevalent in towns with population between 20,000 to 30,000 residents and then trend downward quickly. "City" forms of government are increasingly common once a community exceeds 36,000 residents and are dominant in municipalities with populations above 36,000 – 91% of such municipalities employ a city form.

2013, even though more recent editions of the Massachusetts Municipal Directories were available, so that both sources of data would be consistent.

[11] The Town of Lee has a population of 5788 but has a Representative Town Meeting. Lee adopted Representative Town Meeting at a time when its population exceeded 6,000 and was not required to change when its population fell below the 6,000-person threshold.

All three forms of government are effectively equally prevalent in municipalities with populations of 30,000 to 36,000, where Andover lies. Dracut's current population of 32,167 and Tewksbury's current population of 31,342 are similar to Andover's current population of 36,359. All three have Open Town Meeting; Andover's form of government is therefore not an outlier. The Committee concluded that Andover's population does not suggest that any particular form of government be adopted.

In any case, the Committee contends that population alone should not be the primary determinant of form of government in any community. The best form of government for a community is that which its residents perceive to work most effectively. Population size might be a cause of ineffective governance by Open Town Meeting but is not an intrinsic problem.

On a closely related point, Andover is the largest town in Massachusetts (and likely in the United States) operating with an Open Town Meeting. Some contend that this, in and of itself, is an argument that Andover should adopt a different form of government. The Committee noted this observation but found it unable to justify alteration of Andover's form of government. It is inevitable that one community will be the largest using Open Town Meeting. That distinction will belong to Andover or, if we were to change our form of government, to the next largest community. This status does not provide insight into what a community needs from its government or whether a community's government is effective.

In the interest of completeness, it should be noted that median income and proportion of residents speaking a language other than English at home correlate with population, and thus, correlate with form of government indirectly. Physical area and age distribution do not correlate with any other characteristic nor with form of government.

A substantial proportion of engaged voters attend Town Meeting, and attendance is stable

The Committee undertook an exhaustive, detailed examination of voter behavior trends. The results of this analysis are presented in full and discussed in more depth in Appendix 5. This work consumed many hundreds of hours and explored a wide range of metrics for Annual Town Election and Town Meeting participation, Town Meeting frequency and duration, election and Town Meeting turnout, Town Meeting attendance patterns across multiple meetings and multiple nights of the same meeting, individuals' Town Meeting attendance including number of meetings and number of nights attended, and Town Meeting participation by locality and demographic groups.[12]

[12] Although the study tracked individual voters, the methodology ensured absolute voter confidentiality. State-assigned voter IDs were used to uniquely identify individuals rather than personally identifying data. Indeed, names and addresses were stripped from the data set upon receipt from the State. Without names and addresses in the data set, it is simply not possible to identify to whom a voter ID belongs. As an individual's voter ID is guaranteed not to change while that individual remains a resident of one community, using the voter ID also ensured that no voter would be double-counted or lost if he or she were to move from house to another in Andover.

Data for every night of every Annual and Special Town Meeting and every local election in Andover between 1998 (the first year in which data are available in electronic form) and 2019 (the latest data set posted) were retrieved from State records.

Figure 2 shows how turnout for local elections in Andover and attendance at Annual Town Meetings[13] varied year-on-year between 1998 and 2019.

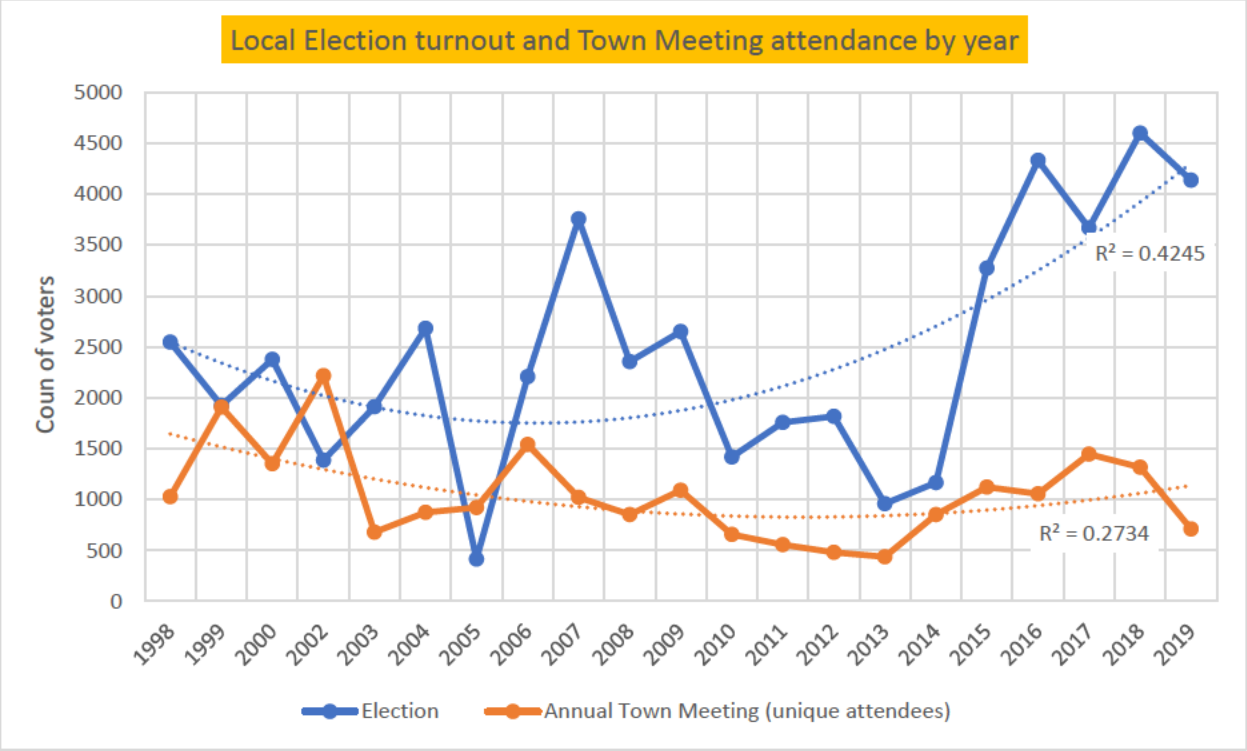


Figure 2 Year-on-year local election turnout and Annual Town Meeting, as absolute numbers

The solid lines show actual turnout and attendance, while the dashed lines are smoothed curves that generally accepted statistical metrics show to be a reasonable fit.[14] It is apparent from the smoothed curves that both Town Meeting attendance and local election turnout dipped between 2010 and 2013, but both have recovered. The peaks before 2010 were caused by especially high-profile "big ticket" items driving attendance, as discussed below. That is, the baseline prior to

[13] For multi-night Town Meetings, anyone who attends one night is counted once, and anyone who attends more than one night is also counted once. This is a true reflection of how many people participated in that Town Meeting. A simple sum of attendance on each night would give an over-inflated view as many people would be double- or triple-counted.

[14] The "R^2" value measures how closely individual data points lie to a curve fitted to the data as a model for the overall shape of the data, and is a widely accepted metric of how well a smoothed trend line represents raw data. Statisticians would consider an R^2 value of 0.42 to mean that a trend line is a very good fit, albeit with a few data points that are a long way from the line. They would consider an R^2 value of 0.27 to indicate that the trend line is a good representation of aggregate behavior, but that individual points are scattered some distance either side of the line.

2010 is not as high as might appear from inspection of Figure 2, and the decline therefore is not as deep as it might appear.

Election turnout has been at an all-time high in most recent elections. Over 4500 voters turned-out for the 2018 Annual Town Election. Attendance at Annual Town Meeting has been as high as 2215, has recently been in the range of 1000 to 1500 attendees consistently, and was of the order of 500 voters even in the "lean years" of 2010 to 2013, only ever dropping below 500 once. Annual Town Meeting attendance has also increased in recent years

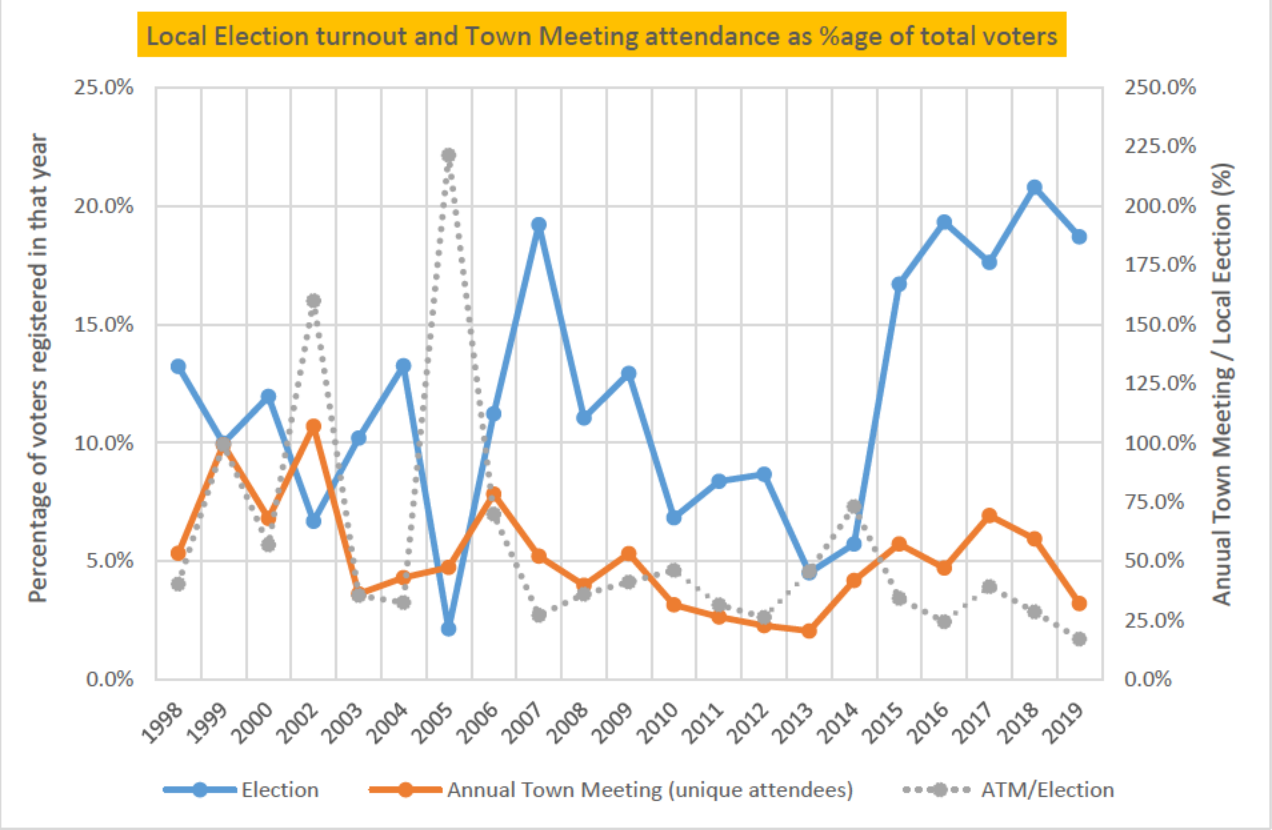


Figure 3 Year-on-year local election turnout and Annual Town Meeting, as percentage of registered voters

Figure 3 shows the same data expressed as percentage of the total number of registered voters.[15] Election turnout has been as low as 5% of the total electorate, has generally been in the range of 7.5% - 12.5%, and has been close to 20% in recent years, reaching 22% in 2018. Annual Town Meeting attendance has ranged as high as 10.7% of the total electorate, but more typically averages 5% to 6%.

[15] The number of registered voters in Andover increased by 15% across the period although not smoothly and has even declined in several years (especially 2003 and 2015). As discussed in Appendix 5, this is not a major influence on turnout nor Town Meeting attendance.

The Committee believes that turnout for local elections is an appropriate metric for measuring the number of residents who have exhibited a basic interest in Andover's local governance. Importantly, in any year, more than 25% of the people who vote in the local election attend Town Meeting. Twenty-five percent is a meaningful proportion. In two years, Annual Town Meeting attendance significantly exceeded election turnout. In those years, Annual Town Meeting was the principal way in which residents engaged in local government.

These data led the Committee to conclude that Town Meeting attendance is strong among residents who are engaged in local government.

Big decisions are made by a substantial proportion of engaged voters

To reiterate, in any year, more than 25% of residents who are engaged as local election voters attend Town Meeting, and in two distinct years, Annual Town Meeting attendance was the principal way in which residents engaged in local government. This finding itself suggests that decisions at Town Meeting are made by a substantial proportion of those who are engaged in Andover's local government.

In fact, Figure 4 shows that attendance is particularly high at Town Meetings with "big ticket" items on the warrant that either have long-term effects on the town or on which voters feel strongly on a personal level. To some albeit lesser extent, these "big ticket" items also influence election turnout.

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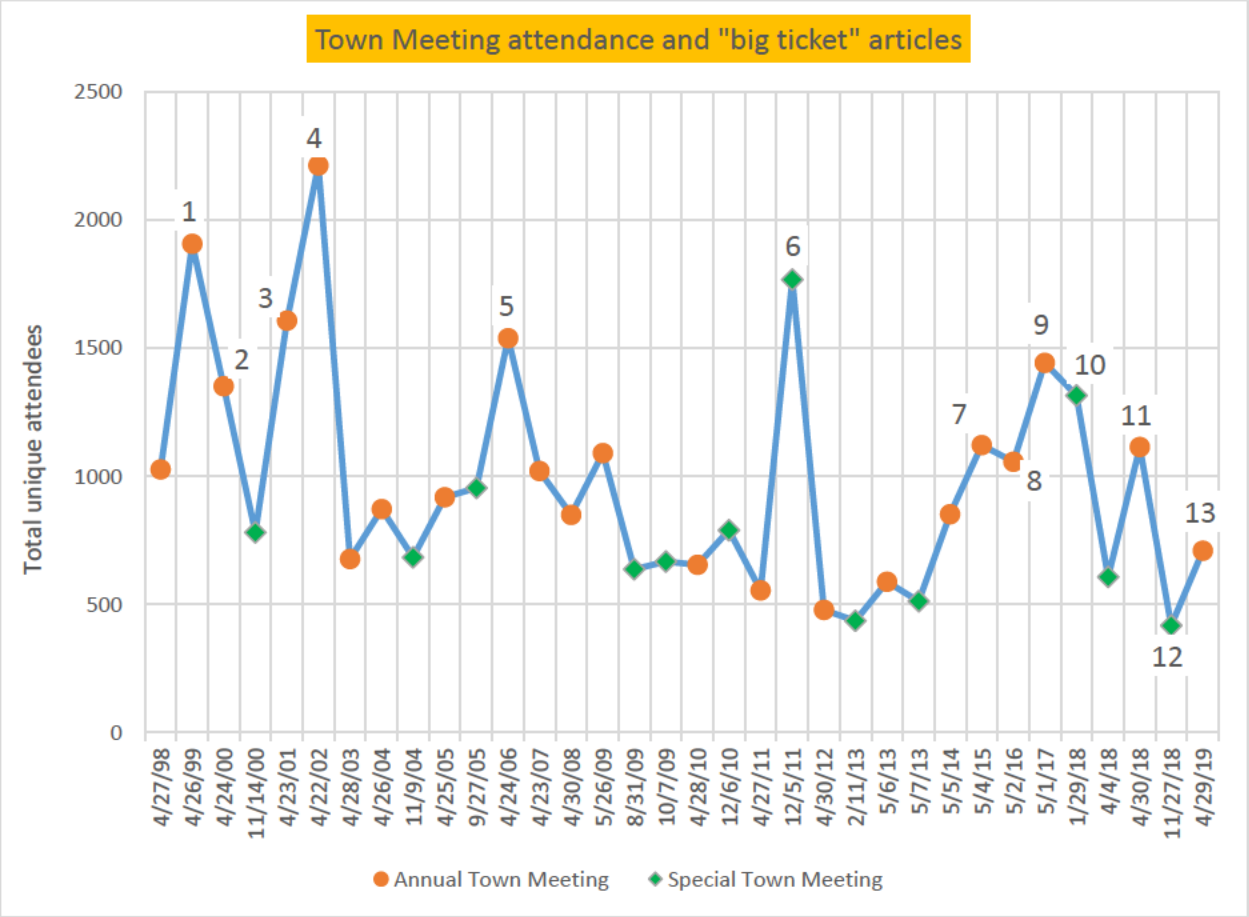


Figure 4 Total attendance at Annual Town Meeting by year, highlighting key issues discussed

Key:

1. Public Safety Center Override, Community Preservation Act, Cross-districting
2. Middle school construction -Wood Hill
3. Zoning Recodification
4. School Override, Zoning bylaws, Playing Fields
5. School budget, Wetlands
6. Youth Center
7. School budget, Zoning bylaws
8. Multiple $1MM - $2MM appropriations, Zoning bylaws
9. School budget, Zoning bylaws, Dogs
10. Marijuana, Dascomb Road
11. North Reading water, Marijuana
12. Ballardvale Fire Station
13. Senior Center, Select Board renaming

High attendance is observed at those Town Meetings that include the following types of articles:

- Sanction atypically large Capital Projects or sanction several projects that cumulatively amount to a large sum (marked in red in the key to Figure 4).
- Change zoning at a macro scale (marked in blue in the key).

- Relate to proposed school operating budgets with line items that are controversial (marked in green in the key).
- Relate to "one-off" topics on which voters feel particularly strongly, such as marijuana (marked in purple in the key).

Attendance is substantially lower at any Town Meeting that does not include articles in one or more of the above categories. The Town Meeting on September 27, 2018, at which the Ballardvale Fire Station project was discussed, and to a lesser extent, the Town Meeting on April 29, 2019, at which the Senior Center was discussed, shows an important subtlety. At both, the appropriations passed with a large majority. It seems that there must be some degree of contention around an article for it to attract large numbers of voters. This is discussed in greater detail in Appendix 5.

Similarly, the Committee considered attendance across nights of multi-night meetings as shown in Figure 5.[16]

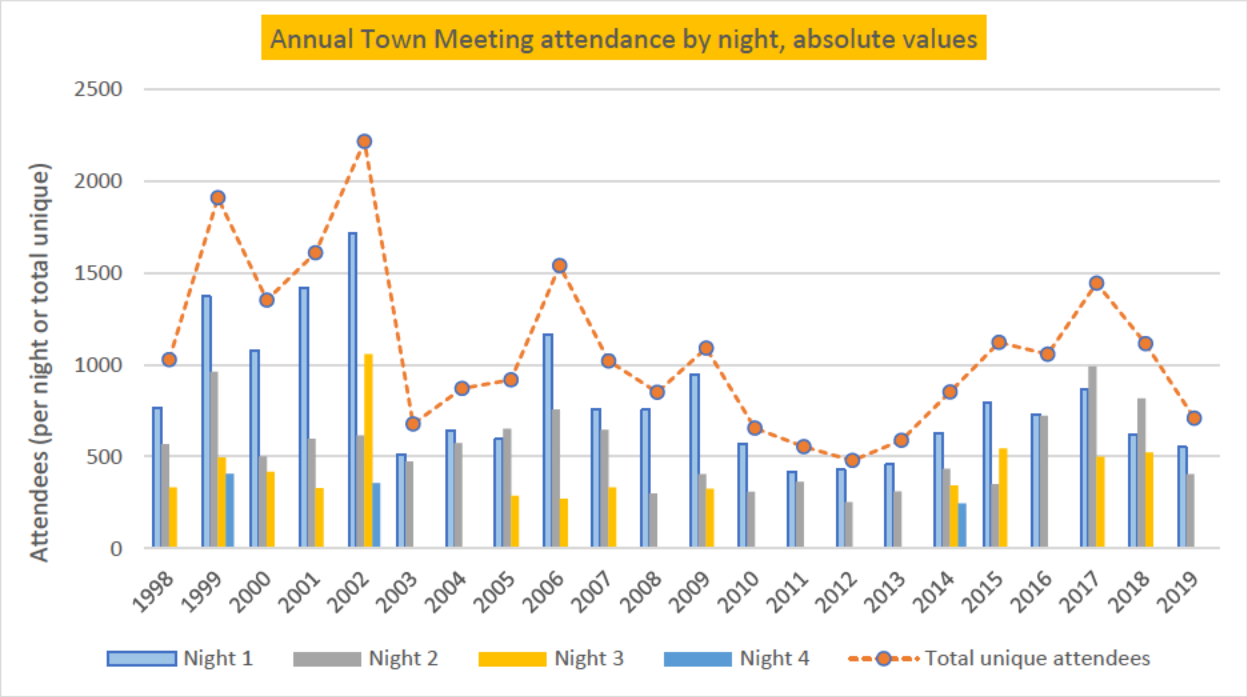


Figure 5 Annual Town Meeting attendance by night, absolute values

The first night of Town Meeting is typically when important recurring matters are discussed and voted upon, such as the Town Departments' and School Department budgets. This is usually well attended. However, the second or third nights have surpassed the first at three Annual Town Meetings and come close at additional meetings. "Big ticket" items were discussed at these meetings on the second or third nights. This further reinforces the previous conclusion that high

[16] Figure 5 does count someone who attends multiple nights once per night, and thus is an exception to the general principle that attendees should not be counted multiple times as is appropriate for this particular analysis.

attendance is achieved when the warrant includes big ticket articles, and in fact shows that this applies not just to meetings as a whole, but also to specific nights of meetings

Based on these data, along with the broader attendance data presented in the previous section, the Committee concluded that big decisions are debated by a substantial percentage of those who have made some effort to participate in Andover's governance at some level.

It is certainly true that these matters are voted upon by many more residents than would be permitted to vote if Representative Town Meeting were adopted. That said, the Committee does not believe that there is an absolute threshold that must be reached for Town Meeting attendance to be considered adequate. One of the strengths of Open Town Meeting is its optionality. Residents have an absolute right to attend, speak, and vote if they choose to do so, or to defer to their neighbors and peer residents if they wish to follow that path. Of course, the Committee acknowledges that some voters are genuinely unable to attend. In any case, the Committee contends that it would be inappropriate to remove the right to Town Meeting participation, exercised by so many, to accommodate an unknown and potentially small number of residents who are not able to participate under the status quo system of government.

A large proportion of attendees at any Town Meeting are regular attendees

The data show that some voters turn out for one issue and thus attendance at Town Meeting swells temporarily for that discussion. However, the data also show that a majority of residents who attend Town Meeting do so repeatedly. Accordingly, one-off, single-issue voters do not dominate Town Meeting.

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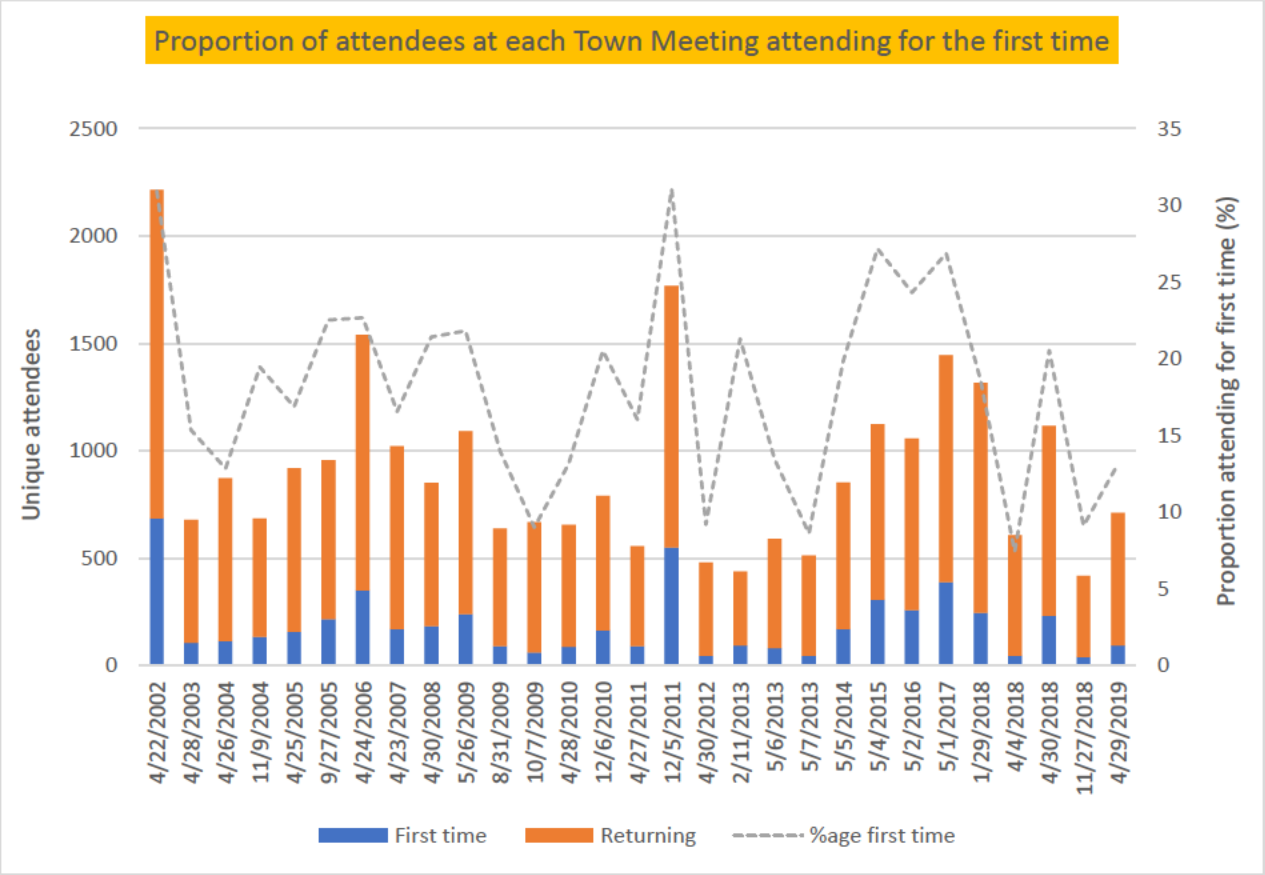


Figure 6 Proportion of attendees at each Town Meeting attending for the first time

Figure 6 shows that the proportion of first-time attendees correlates roughly with overall attendance. That is, first-time attendees are more likely to attend meetings at which "big ticket" items are debated. First-time attendees never exceed 31% of those present. Figure 7 broadens this and shows that, on any given night of Town Meeting, 60% to 80% of attendees have attended five or more nights previously, and 40% - 80% (typically around 60%) have attended 10 or more nights of Town Meeting.[17][18] If one were to consider someone who has attended five nights or less as an infrequent attendee (although the threshold is subjective, of course), infrequent attendees comprise between 20% and 40% of the voters present.

[17] At any time, the population of Andover includes some proportion of people who have moved into town recently. These residents have not lived in Andover for long enough to register in one or both of these counts.

[18] The analysis starts five meetings into the period. Prior to that, it is possible that voters would appear to be first-timers simply because no data were available for Town Meetings prior to 1998.

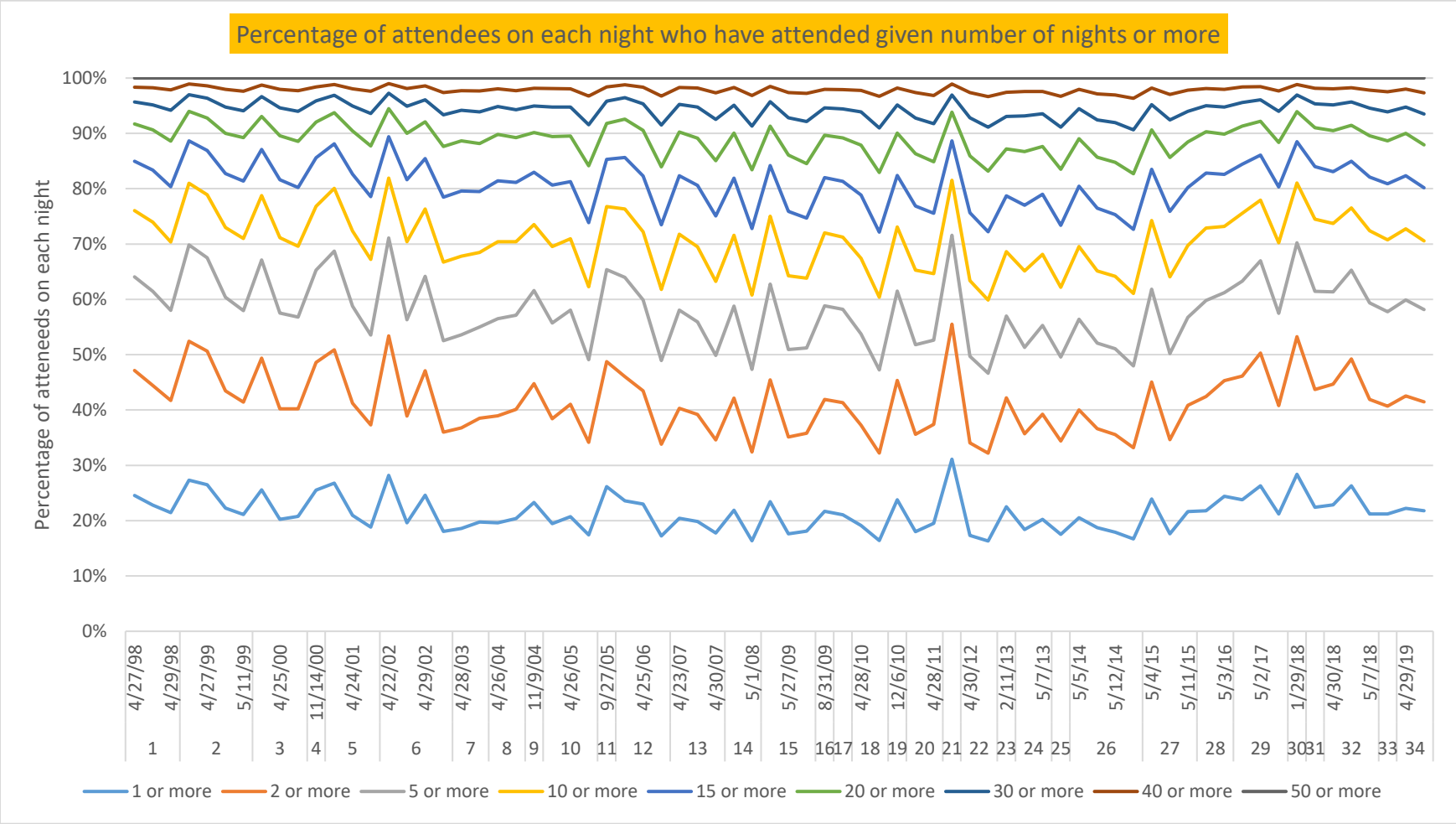


Figure 7 Percentage of attendees on each night of Town Meeting who have attended given number of nights or more

The Committee considers this to be a strength, rather than a weakness, of Open Town Meeting. Residents may, and do, fully engage at any time when an issue that is important to them is under consideration, at their own discretion. Deeper analysis shows that persons who attend for the first time to debate a big-ticket item often go on to become regular attendees. The big-ticket items are a motivator for engagement.

Conversely, the data show that a high proportion of Town Meeting attendees are experienced Town Meeting participants. Voters have seen how Town Meeting works and know the process. They also attend irrespective of the issues to be discussed. Town Meeting is not dominated by one-off, single-issue voters.

In any case, the Committee finds that concerns about turnout influencing Town Meeting votes is misplaced. Every legislative decision hinges on who has engaged, either to vote at Town Meeting or to elect those who will make decisions in a Representative Town Meeting or a council. Town Meeting may decide in accordance with who participate in the session, just as a council may decide in accordance with the wishes of the constituencies who turned out for the council member elections. Local democracy inevitably involves decision-making by those who show up.

Open Town Meeting represents Andover as a whole

Figure 8 breaks down attendance for every night of every Annual and Special Town Meeting since 1998, and shows the percentage of total attendees from each "locality."[19] It is readily apparent that the width of the stripes is similar between localities and Town Meeting sessions.[20] For example, it is not possible by visual inspection of Figure 8 to determine which band represents the High Plain/Wood Hill locality or the Town Meeting at which the appropriation for the High Plain/Wood Hill schools was voted. With few exceptions, residents do not turn out disproportionately for issues when either their locality stands to benefit most or would be more adversely impacted than other localities. The Ballardvale Fire Station vote is an example of this. There was strong opposition to this project from some residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed new fire station, and these residents did turn out to voice their opposition. However, the town as a whole approved the article by a substantial margin.

The Committee concluded that Open Town Meeting represents all of Andover geographically, not individual neighborhoods.

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[19]The term "Locality" is used rather than "precinct" for this analysis because Andover's precincts are not all the same size. Had precincts been used, one would almost expect to see that more Town Meeting attendees come from some precincts than others. However, a code is assigned to each voter which is independent of their precinct and provides a more precise indicator of a voter's "locality." These codes are assigned such that each "locality" comprises a similar number of voters. These locality codes were used in this analysis. Precincts will be rebalanced in 2022 and this distinction will be rendered moot.

[20] One might argue that the light blue and orange bands towards the bottom of the chart are slightly broader than some others. This is because even though populations of localities are much better balanced than precincts, the number of voters are not perfectly equal. The important point is that these bands are consistently slightly broader.

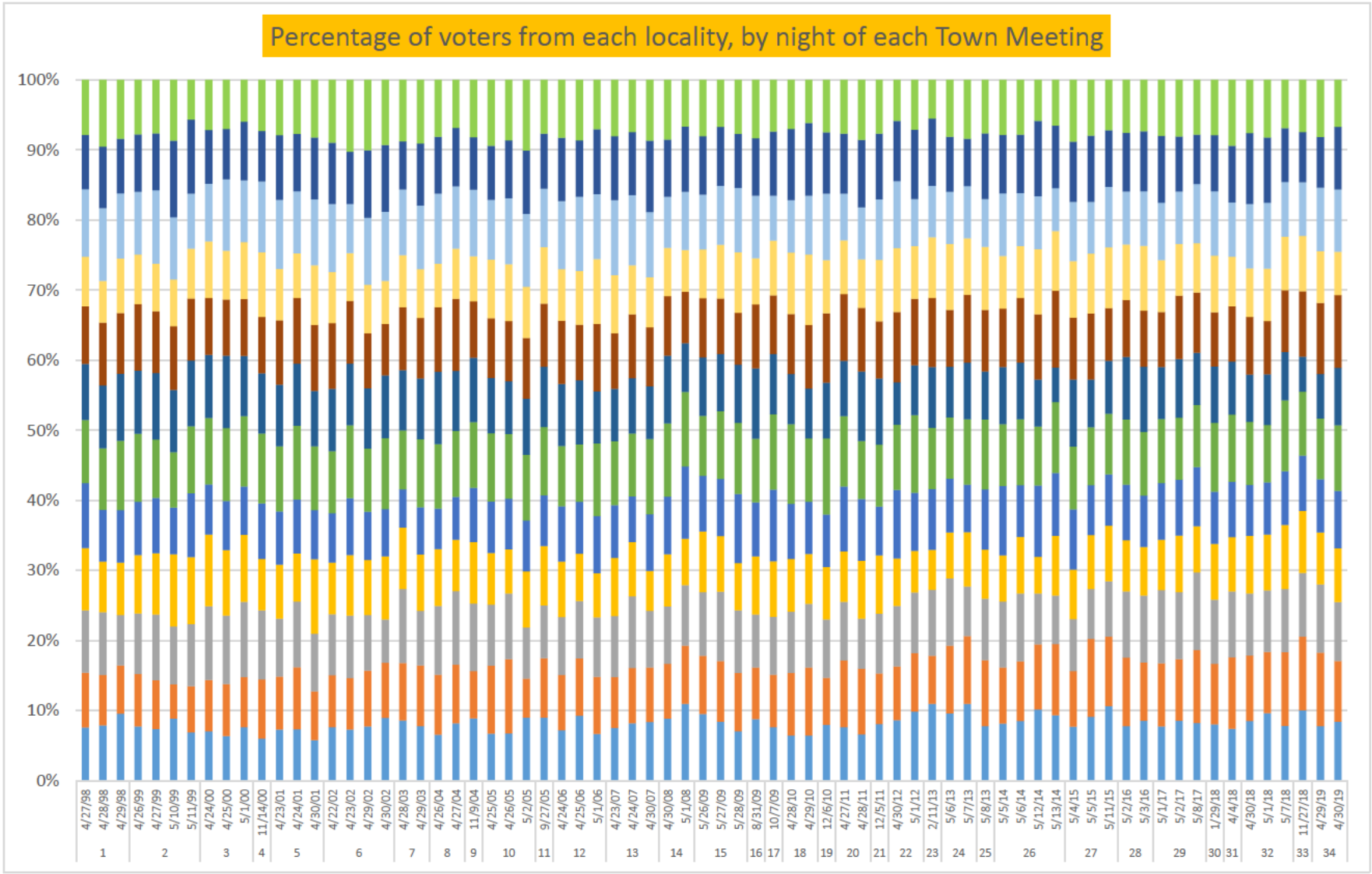


Figure 8 Percentage of attendees from each locality, by each night of each Town Meeting

iii. Alternative Forms of Government Considered and Rejected.

In arriving at its decision to recommend retention and enhancement of Open Town Meeting, the Committee intensively considered the purported benefits of alternative forms of government. Several Committee members expressed positive views and engaged in vigorous debate on different aspects of alternative forms of government. These expressions led to further exploration of what alternative forms of government may provide to Andover that Open Town Meeting does not offer.

However, the Committee ultimately found that, at this time, no alternative form of government provided benefits that, on balance, result in a government materially superior to Andover's current form of government. Many of the ostensibly attractive features of these alternatives raised several significant concerns. In particular, the Committee found the following about each of the leading alternative forms of government:

1. Representative Town Meeting–

    a. Some contend that this form of government is widely participatory and equivalent to Open Town Meeting. In reality, a representative form of Town Meeting excludes hundreds of Open Town Meeting attendees. Over the last three decades, approximately 500-2,500 individual residents per meeting have attended one or more of Andover's Open Town Meetings. Under a Representative Town Meeting, State law permits a maximum of 240 residents to be elected as voting members (and likely that less than this would actually attend). The gray shaded area in Figure 9 below represents the number of voters who attended Open Town Meetings, by year, who would have been unable to do so had Andover operated under Representative Town Meeting at that time.

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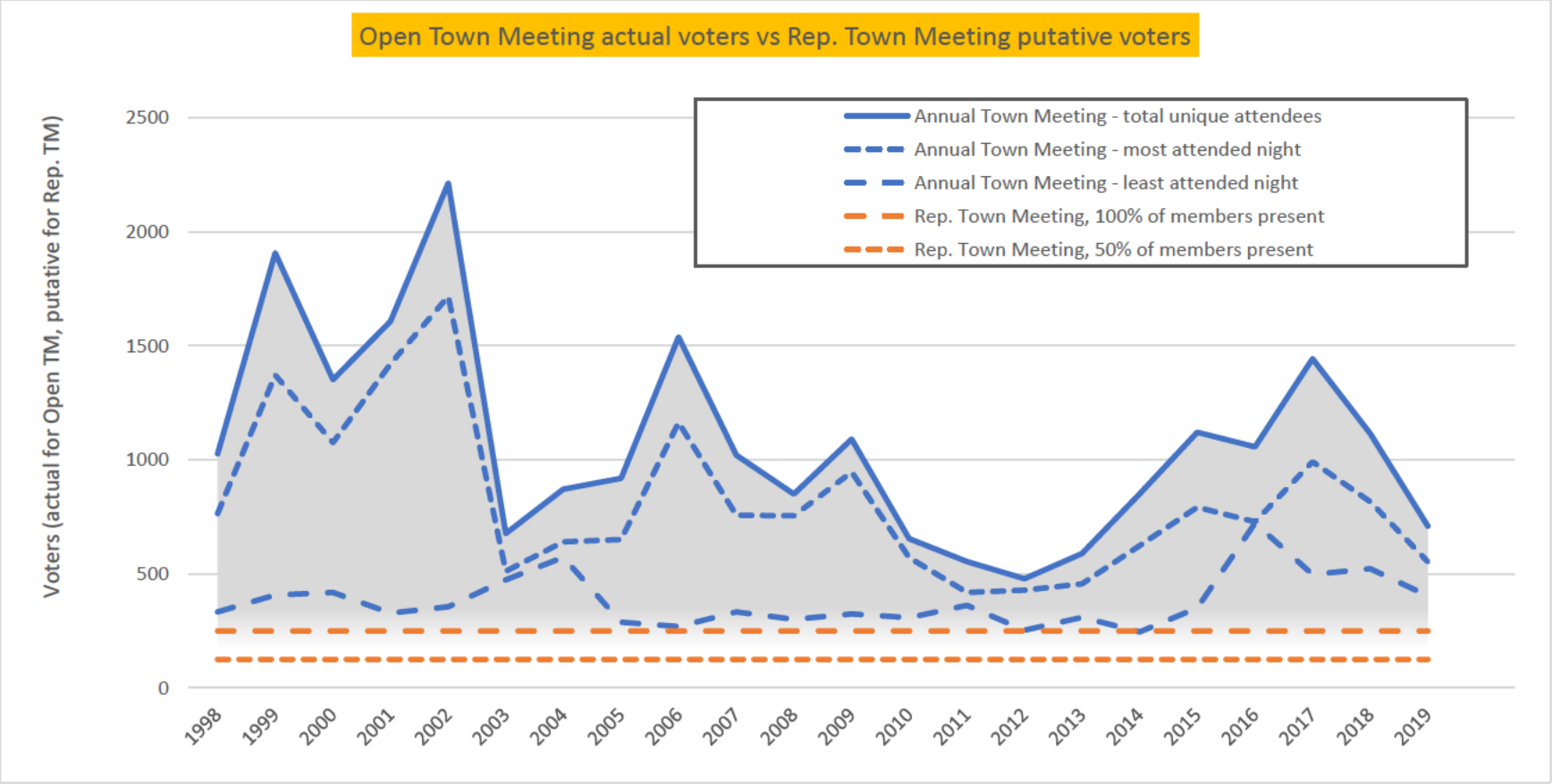


Figure 9 Number of residents empowered to vote at Open vs Representative Town Meeting

Some contend that Representative Town Meeting elections provide residents with a choice of their representation. This is theoretically true, but data from other communities show that representative elections are usually uncontested, and seats sometimes go unfilled. Even when seats *are* filled, the Committee's research suggests that representatives' low attendance is a problem in some communities.

b. Some contend that Representative Town Meeting is more efficient and agile than Open Town Meeting. The Committee's researched showed that Representative Town Meetings tend to last longer than Open Town Meetings given that the meeting is populated entirely by elected representatives who might feel obligated to opine on multiple articles, perhaps multiple times. Also, the Committee learned that convening and administering a Representative Town Meeting is not materially easier than convening an Open Town Meeting and therefore is no more nimble than an Open Town Meeting.

c. Some contend that transitioning to Representative Town Meeting is the next logical evolution of Andover's government and necessary to keep Andover at the forefront of modern governance practice. The Committee learned that no Open Town Meeting community has adopted Representative Town Meeting since 1989. The "next logical evolution" is whatever is best for Andover.

2. Council-Manager –

a. Some contend that a council would be more "representative" than Open Town Meeting. However, based on detailed analysis of two decades of Town Meeting attendance, the Committee learned that Town Meeting attendees are geographically representative of Andover. Readers are referred to the discussion of geographical representativeness in the section of this report addressing concerns with Open Town Meeting (see page 47). Also, Town Meeting attendees and those who vote in local elections generally are demographically similar, suggesting that an elected representative form of government would not meaningfully engage a different demographic than does Open Town Meeting.

Further, no form of government seems to have "cracked the code" on equally representing the population at large. We see this at the federal level and the local level. Young people do not typically vote in proportion to their population share. Similarly, low-income residents typically vote at significantly lower rates.

If we were to discard Open Town Meeting for a representative form of government (i.e., a Representative Town Meeting or a Council), the voters would choose their representatives and, if current experience is a predictor, would likely choose leaders who do not completely reflect the community at large. And perhaps more importantly, the voters who would elect Town Meeting

representatives or councilors would themselves not reflect the community – we know this because the UMass Lowell public opinion survey shows that those who vote in local elections tend to be older and wealthier than the population at large. Therefore, whether the decision-makers are the Open Town Meeting attendees or the voters who elect their representatives/councilors, the "governors" are rarely perfectly reflective of the population at large.

The Committee cautions against discarding Open Town Meeting, where everyone can theoretically participate, only to replace it with a representative system that some hope will be more reflective of the community.

b. Here again, some have contended that Andover is too large not to have a Council-Manager form of government, which is used in about 50% of all municipalities in the United States and particularly in communities with a population of 25,000-75,000 residents. For the reasons stated above, population is not solely determinative of a community's form of government. It is also worth noting that Andover is substantially built-out, meaning that substantial growth is not imminent.

c. Some have contended that attendance at Open Town Meeting is often too low to justify continued use of the form of government. Town Meeting attendance has been discussed in detail in the section of this report discussing concerns with Open Town Meeting, but the findings are repeated here. In any year, more than 25% of residents who vote in local elections attend Annual Town Meeting. In some years, twice as many residents attend Annual Town Meeting than vote in local elections. Also, 500 residents attend at least one night of Annual Town Meeting in almost every year. A key question is whether a 13-person council would reach better decisions or be more representative than a 500-person Town Meeting?

d. Some contend that a council form of government would be more agile and efficient than an Open Town Meeting. Convening a 13-person council would undoubtedly be easier and could occur twice a month or more frequently. That said, the Committee acknowledged the possibility that a council could be gripped by indecision, gridlock, or infighting, thereby losing any agility advantage. Also, and more important, the Committee noted that agility, which a council brings to legislating, does not always lead to better decisions. Often, decisions made quickly suffer from deficient consideration and public input.

e. Some contend that, under a council form of government, resident participation would be preserved through the ability to offer comment at council meetings. The Committee acknowledges this but notes that offering public comment at a council meeting is not equivalent to voting as a member of Open Town Meeting. The

average residents' ability to impact legislation and associated policy outcomes is far superior in an Open Town Meeting form of government.

f. Similarly, some contend that, under a council form of government, resident participation would be preserved through the ability to offer comment at board and committee meetings. Here again, this right is already present in an Open Town Meeting format and is not equivalent to the voting power of residents at an Open Town Meeting.

g. Some contend that Open Town Meeting gives undue influence to special interests and allows groups to "stack" Town Meeting. The Committee was concerned that, in a council system, special interests may have greater influence given that there are fewer legislators to influence in that format, and those few legislators typically raise money and campaign for the handful of seats.

h. Finally, some contend that Andover needs to change its form of government now because, though it is suitable at present, it will not work for Andover in the future. The Committee does not believe that Andover's population growth, Town Meeting attendance, or government decision-making suggests the imminent inaptness of Town Meeting. The benefits of Open Town Meeting are durable and meaningful.

3. Council-Mayor – The Committee considered a Council-Mayor form of government and deemed it ill-suited to Andover. This "city" form of government would relinquish all the benefits of Open Town Meeting, discard the advantage of a professional manager chosen for competence and experience, and invite a politicization of the Town's administration. If a council were viewed as preferable to Town Meeting, the Committee would recommend a Council-Manager government and found no reason to endorse a Council-Mayor form of government.

4. New Hampshire's SB-2 Model – A fifth form of government also arose during the Committee's research in the course of exploring alternative variations of Open Town Meeting. Some New Hampshire communities use an "SB-2" model wherein Town Meeting deliberates on articles, but residents vote by ballot after the Town Meeting to approve or disapprove of articles.

   The Committee explored this unique, non-Massachusetts form of government in several Committee and subcommittee meetings, drawing on resident feedback, research into New Hampshire's experience with SB-2, advice from Town Counsel, advice from outside counsel specializing in Massachusetts municipal law, and the Committee's consultants, Community Paradigm Associates.

The Committee does not endorse adoption of this model for several reasons. First, this is currently illegal under the Town's charter and would require enactment of special legislation by the State Legislature. Obtaining this legislative approval may be difficult given that the Legislature may object to a charter revision that, in stripping Town Meeting of its decision-making function, is fundamentally inconsistent with the Town Meeting-oriented charter adopted under an arduous legal process. Because SB-2 renders Town Meeting discussions non-binding, such a change would alter the very foundation of the Town's Town Meeting government.

Importantly, the Committee also objects to the SB-2 form because it would render Town Meeting participation a nullity and therefore drive down participation in Town Meeting over time. Data from New Hampshire's SB-2 communities confirms this.

The Committee learned that no Massachusetts community has adopted an SB-2 form, and, to the Committee's knowledge, no community has considered it seriously. The former chair of the Massachusetts Municipal Association Fiscal Policy Board notes that this board has never considered this form and cautioned that the MMA may object "strenuously" to implementation of SB-2 in the Commonwealth.

The Committee recommends that Andover retain its Open Town Meeting form of government. It does so with full recognition of Open Town Meeting's current flaws. Government is, in essence, a collection of persons and human processes forged in civic debate and tempered by evolving circumstances. In this context, no government is perfect. The many enhancements recommended by the Committee aim at curbing these flaws in our Town Meeting structure and practices.

The Committee also recognizes the lack of a substantial, uni-directional public groundswell for change. Given that discarding Open Town Meeting would be an historic, seismic transformation of the Town's government, it would be irresponsible for the Committee to recommend a change – which it independently and strongly assesses to be unnecessary – that could have unintended consequences to the community's culture. Therefore, the Committee believes it most prudent to enhance Open Town Meeting by adopting the several recommended reforms before agreeing to discard it forever to history.

iv. Town Meeting Reforms & Enhancements.

In recommending that the Town retain its Open Town Meeting form of government, the Committee was attuned to areas where Andover's Town Meeting could be improved. No form of government is perfect. However, for the reasons described above, the Committee strongly believes that Open Town Meeting remains the best form of government for Andover at this time. The Committee also believes that several enhancements to Andover's Open Town Meeting will provide substantial improvements to the meeting's deliberative process and increase voter engagement. Accordingly, the Committee recommends the following enhancements to Andover's Open Town Meeting.

The Committee's recommendation for the retention of Open Town Meeting, while not conditioned on adoption of the below reforms, is emphatically offered with the following strong reform and enhancement recommendations. The Committee does not support the status quo, and these reforms seek to change the status quo.

Open Town Meeting Reforms

Reform	Benefit
Adopt in-person electronic voting	Shortens meeting, allows confidential voting
Consolidate discussion of related articles even if separate votes are required	Shortens meeting, makes the context of articles more understandable
Support Town Meeting endorsement of conduct that is civil, honest, respectful of the time of others, and respectful of the right of others to speak	Encourages efficient, inclusive, civil, and honest debate
Prohibit events on Town/School property during Town Meeting nights. School Committee and Select Board make decisions and phase-in with notice to residents.	Reduces conflicting demands for voters' time
Encourage submission of amendments for public review prior to Town Meeting and give priority in consideration to those amendments that are pre-filed.	Shortens meeting, eliminates cause of voter confusion, enables legal review and public vetting
Provide pre-Town Meeting discussion of articles: virtual & in-person, streamed & recorded	Facilitates remote participation, increased public participation, and enhanced vetting of articles
Provide online Town Meeting training videos re process, the budget, zoning, etc.	Makes process less daunting and encourages attendance, and smoother debate of complex articles
Provide "welcome packet" orienting new residents on Town Meeting.	Makes process less daunting to and encourages attendance among new residents
Recommend that remote electronic voting be actively explored by the Town as technological and legal dimensions are better understood over time	Provides clear statement of interest and allows for continued consideration as new facts emerge

Adopt In-person Electronic Voting

The Committee distinguished in-person electronic voting on the floor of Town Meeting from remote electronic voting. The former is permitted today by State law, although adoption would require changes to Andover's Bylaws to implement. The latter is an emerging innovation. The Committee recommends that Andover adopt in-person electronic voting on the floor of Town Meeting.

In-person electronic voting has the potential to shorten and enhance Town Meeting. Early estimates suggest that a combination of the reforms recommended by the Committee has the potential to eliminate one night of a multi-night meeting. This is significant and may enable participation by time-pressed voters who currently cannot attend Town Meeting. While some contend that the cost of electronic voting should preclude its use, the savings in time, which translate to savings in room hire, overtime, police details etc. might outweigh the cost.

In-person electronic voting also guarantees confidentiality and privacy in voting. While some contend that voting at Town Meeting should be open and visible, the Committee heard several comments that many voters who attend Town Meeting are concerned about reprisals and some voters are even unwilling to attend Town meeting because of this fear. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that adopting electronic voting may enfranchise voters and enhance the democratic process.

The Town must of course be concerned about security risks associated with electronic voting. The Committee researched this thoroughly, including interviewing staff of other towns where electronic voting is already employed. No town has any evidence that a security breach has ever occurred. On the contrary, some reported that residents have much higher trust in votes carried out electronically. To ensure secure operation, the Committee strongly recommends that Andover should only consider voting systems designed and constructed specifically for high-integrity applications such as legislative voting, and discount those that are sold for more general use (such as audience participation systems). Furthermore, the Committee recommends that processes and procedures be carefully devised and implemented to guarantee integrity of the systems, for example, robust processes for handing out and returning voting devices or for auditing and validating votes.

Consolidate Discussion of Related Articles Even if Separate Votes are Required

At Town Meetings, articles are often linked together by general topics. For example, changes to how the Town regulates signs requires separate articles and separate votes amending the general bylaws and the zoning bylaws. While separate votes are often required by State law and/or the Town's bond counsel, the discussion of multiple articles at the same time is within the power of the Moderator and each Town Meeting. Consent agenda articles have already demonstrably accelerated Town Meeting.

The Committee recommends that articles that are directly linked by topic and substance be consolidated for discussion, albeit with separate votes, so Town Meeting can engage in deliberation that is not artificially compartmentalized by legal procedure. This will likely allow more thorough, holistic, and efficient deliberation.

Civil, Honest, and Efficient Debate at Town Meeting.

Town Meeting deliberations should be honest, open, civil, and efficient (i.e., respectful of attendees' time). The Committee strongly supports the current practice wherein the Moderator asks each Town Meeting to affirm values contributing to civility. While a "code of conduct" is too prescriptive and difficult to enforce, actions that encourage proper discourse and decorum should be advanced.

Prohibit Events on Town & School Property During Town Meeting Sessions.

Attending Town Meeting can be difficult for residents with families, work obligations, and myriad other competing commitments. It is beyond the power of government, and outside the scope of governance, to remove all of the barriers that prevent residents from attending Town Meeting. However, the Select Board and School Committee have the ability to preclude competing events on Town property during Town Meeting sessions.

The Committee recommends that the Select Board and School Committee, which have jurisdiction and control over the use of Town- and School-owned property, consider and take public input on precluding sports, theater, and other events on Town property during these relatively few hours each year. The Town should not "counter-program" its own legislature and make it harder for residents to do their civic duty.

If such a policy were adopted, it should be phased-in to give sufficient notice to community stakeholders.

Encourage Pre-Submission of Town Meeting Article Amendments.

The Committee recommends that the Town strongly incentivize pre-submission of article amendments for review prior to Town Meeting. Under the Committee's suggested framework, article amendments would be submitted three business days before the first session of Town Meeting. This would allow for Town Counsel and committees to review and consider amendments before Town Meeting, thereby creating both efficiency, transparency, and "good legislating" effects. The proponents of pre-submitted amendments would be required to attend and present their amendments at Town Meeting notwithstanding their pre-submission of the amendments. Under this framework, amendments could, as is the current practice, be submitted on the floor of Town Meeting (in addition to the pre-submission of amendments).

To encourage the pre-submission of amendments (as opposed to the submission of floor amendments), priority in consideration should be given to amendments that were submitted before Town Meeting. Considering pre-submitted amendments prior to those submitted from the floor would allow proponents of pre-submitted amendments an increased likelihood of having their amendments considered (given that debate may be concluded before all amendments are discussed), particularly on articles where multiple amendments may be moved.

Pre-Town Meeting Discussion of Articles.

The Committee discussed several methods by which the public could be more robustly engaged in Town Meeting. At a time when professional, government, and personal meetings are increasingly virtual, the Committee investigated ways that Town Meeting participation could be achieved without residents having to enter the physical meeting space.[21]

The Committee fashioned the following format allowing for remote and in-person deliberation of Town Meeting articles:

- The current conduct of Town Meeting would not be altered. Each article would be presented, debated, and voted upon during Town Meeting.
- However, days or a week before Town Meeting, there would be made available to residents a session or series of sessions wherein public and private article proponents would present on their articles and answer questions from residents.
- The session(s) would be simultaneously live-streamed via interactive application so that both remote and in-person residents could ask questions and make comments.
- The session(s) would also be recorded so that residents could listen to the material on their own schedule. Those residents would be able to email questions to article proponents. The recordings could have time markings to allow residents to "jump" to the articles that interest them.
- Multiple sessions could be held to allow for the grouping of financial articles, zoning/planning articles, bylaw amendments, etc.

This format would effectively provide a degree of non-binding remote deliberation before the commencement of Town Meeting. This would promote transparency, perhaps make Town Meeting more efficient, allow more residents to engage, and serve good governance by more fully vetting articles. The sessions would be an enhancement of a public forum practice currently used ad hoc and would guarantee a remote aspect. This approach might also give the community insight into the advantages and disadvantages of a fully remote Open Town Meeting, should that ever be legalized and chosen by the community. Also, when combined with the reform encouraging that article amendments be submitted before Town Meeting, this format would

[21] As is discussed more fully below, see page 60, fully remote Open Town Meetings are not permitted under State law. This recommendation seeks to operate within that legal framework.

provide for a fuller and more accessible preview of Town Meeting content before formal Town Meeting sessions.

Implementing this format would be no simple matter. One question is how the Town would minimize duplication between questions and discussion at the pre-Town Meeting session and at Town Meeting. The Committee recognizes that there might be duplication of content initially but that, as the new format became more recognized and successful, there would be less duplication over time.

Another question is how the Town would ensure that private article proponents participate in the pre-Town Meeting session(s). It is important to the motivating goals of the format that all article proponents participate. It is likely that private article proponents will feel a strong impetus to participate in the pre-Town Meeting session even if they are not formally required to do so. This pre-Town Meeting session would provide a distinct benefit to the proponent of an article by providing them with broader public exposure; therefore, these sessions are distinctly different from the meetings of the Select Board, School Committee, Planning Board, etc. where articles are debated and voted on in the weeks and months before Town Meeting so that the board or committee may determine its recommendation on the article. This benefit would provide potent encouragement of participation.

The Committee believes that, in the initial years of implementation, the Town should encourage but not require participation in the pre-Town Meeting sessions. Town Meeting tends to police itself and may appropriately dispose of articles from non-participating article proponents.

Provide Town Meeting Education Resources.

Town Meeting procedures, and the content of articles deliberated on at Town Meeting, can be daunting for any resident. The data presented previously in the discussion of "stacking" show that up to 31% of attendees on any night of Town Meeting might be attending for the first time. Long-time and new residents, particularly those who are unfamiliar with Town Meetings, may choose to abstain from Town Meeting attendance for fear of embarrassment, casting the "wrong" vote, or wasting time their time attempting to shape the debate but not knowing how. The Town Administration, acting through the Town Manager and Town Clerk, should produce short information videos that educate residents on Town Meeting nomenclature (e.g., "warrants" and "articles"), procedure (e.g., for making amendments), and the substance of articles (e.g., bylaws, zoning, the budget). The content should be brief, accessible, and straight-forward.

Welcome Packets for New Residents.

The Town should send each new resident a personalized "welcome packet" containing a message from the community, links to key Town offices and boards, and sharing key information about how the Town's government operates. This information may touch upon, but should not be limited to, Town Meeting. Welcoming new residents will make this a friendlier community, as

well as a better informed one. This packet should also be promoted to existing residents and available for download from the Town's website.

Explore Remote Electronic Voting.

The Committee recommends that Town Meeting adopt *in-person* electronic voting (see above). This is within the Town's power to adopt at present. In contrast, *remote* electronic voting is not yet permissible for Open Town Meeting forms of government. Given this, no action can be taken at this time.[22]

However, communities in Massachusetts, such Wayland, are studying this advancement. Wayland's Electronic Voting Subcommittee, based in large part on its positive experience with in-person electronic voting, is investigating the technical and legal impediments to remote electronic voting at Open Town Meeting. Wayland is reaching out to like-minded, innovative communities to gauge interest in a multi-year effort to (1) develop technology facilitating remote electronic voting and (2) push for State legislative authorization of this practice. This nascent effort by Wayland is a new development that renders remote electronic voting in Open Town Meeting a more mature possibility than it had previously been. During the Coid-19 pandemic, the State allowed Representative Town Meetings to conduct its business remotely. Other legislation has been offered extending that permission to Open Town Meetings.

Based on conversations with a member of the State legislature, it appears that many Massachusetts lawmakers are open to the concept of remote electronic voting and are taking time to ensure that any methodology for conducting remote voting would, as a matter of equity, be affordable and accessible to *all* communities in the Commonwealth and not just affluent ones. Further, the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Governments endorsed enabling legislation in June 2021 and the sent the bill to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means for further review.

Andover should stay attuned as facts and understandings evolve on this topic. The potential for bringing Town Meeting to residents' homes, pulling a centuries-old form of government into the 21st Century, is powerful and reflects the realities of today's dynamic society. The potential for this kind of fundamental change in Town Meetings is yet another reason the Committee does not support abandoning this form of government.

Not Recommended – Hold Perennial Fall Town Meeting for Land Use Articles.

This is a reform that is not recommended. Over the years, a number of residents have urged the Town to split Town meeting into two sessions: a spring meeting for fiscal and administrative matters and a fall meeting devoted to land use, planning, and zoning matters. The Town Meeting

[22] Note that the aforementioned Town Meeting reform entitled "Pre-Town Meeting Discussion of Articles" recognizes the prohibition on remote participation and attempts to push the envelope within legal bounds to expand remote participation options for residents.

Efficiency subcommittee recommended, and the full Committee unanimously agreed, that this reform should not be adopted. State law requires a town to accept onto the warrant any article provided that certain basic requirements are met (e.g., that the article has been signed by only 10 residents). Andover could not prevent zoning articles at the spring Town Meeting or non-zoning articles at the fall Town Meeting. Thus, this reform would be unworkable. In any case, even if it were feasible to separate zoning from non-zoning matters, it is doubtful that this would increase efficiency. In principle, shorter meetings might be easier for a resident to attend than one longer meeting. In reality, it is equally probable that holding biannual meetings would invite more articles to be submitted in total.

B. Tier One Secondary Issues –

In turning to its study of non-form of government topics, the Committee first studied two topics comprising tier one. These included (i) how boards and committees[23] are appointed and related issues, and (ii) the Town government's communication with community stakeholders.

i. Committee Appointment, Existence, Structure, Etc.

The Committee studied the following:

- By what process should members be appointed to boards and committees? Election or Appointment? Appointment by whom? Do different boards have different requirements?
- Should an Appointments Committee be constituted?
- Is the appointment process sufficiently transparent, or how could transparency be enhanced?
- Is it sufficiently clear who "owns" the appointment process and has authority to appoint certain Town positions?
- Specifically, by what process should members be appointed to the Finance Committee?
- Specifically, by what process should members be appointed to the Planning Board?
- Specifically, is the Talent Bank Form too vague to be a basis by which appointments are made?
- Specifically, should openings be advertised more prominently?
- Specifically, how do we ensure that the people who are appointed to committees are those who are most able to contribute?

Recognizing the efforts of over 300 volunteers, over 50 Town boards, committees, and commissions, and the important contributions each volunteer makes to the governance of Andover's citizens, old and young, a dedicated subcommittee of the Committee conducted an in-

[23] Throughout this section of the report, the terms "boards" or "committees" refer to public bodies of the municipality, including boards, committees, commissions, and task forces.

investigation of the structure, efficiency, and diversity that these groups exhibit, both individually and as a vital part of Town operations as a whole.

A thorough study was made of boards, committees and commissions on certain aspects of membership, the appointment process, and how prospective members may benefit from enhancements to basic information flow.

Topics were expanded to include the following recommendations, which were approved by the full Committee.

1. **The Committee recommends no change to the process by which members are appointed to boards and committees.**

The current process is working well. The list of positions that are elected were extensively reviewed and the logic behind election of those positions was supported. The Committee did not identify any appointed positions that should instead be elected. The Committee was aware that selecting certain positions by ballot, as opposed to via appointment, may result in turning away qualified residents who would serve if appointed but would not run for election. This could also result in popular but less qualified individuals taking office.

Noted was the fact that trustees of the Cornell Fund, which are elected by Town Meeting, and the Punchard Free School Trustees, which are elected by ballot, are selected that way pursuant to the terms of the original Trust.

The method of selecting Planning Board members is discussed below in its own section.

2. **The Committee is not in favor of establishing a separate Appointments Committee.**

This method of appointing committee members is rarely, if ever, used in other municipalities. Adopting this in Andover would create a significant challenge, namely, the circular question of who appoints the appointment committee. Also, it is unclear whether any one committee would possess the knowledge of diverse Town operations to know who should be appointed to particular bodies.

Also, if a committee were to lead the appointment process, candidates would have to interview in public in accordance with the Open Meeting Law – this may dissuade residents from applying in the first place.

Finally, the Town Manager has the responsibility to achieve goals established by the Select Board and Town Meeting – if the manager is not allowed to appoint members to bodies to ensure that they function properly, the manager would have to be released from his high level of responsibility and converted to a more passive facilitator of Town operations.

3. <u>The Committee does not recommend one generic, standard appointment process applicable to all boards and committees.</u>

The Committee agreed that the appointment process should be inclusive, equitable, and designed to get the "best people" for any particular board or committee. However, the appointment process varies from committee to committee, and it would be difficult to make a generic statement to define that process.

Furthermore, the subcommittee is cognizant that board and committee members give their time freely to serve Andover. The appointment process cannot unduly consume applicants' time and efforts, nor compromise applicants' right to privacy by unreasonable public scrutiny. Nonetheless, a number of measures are recommended to enhance transparency across the boards. These include the recommendations for enhancements to the Talent Bank form (see below), and the call for an expanded effort to advertise vacancies.

Improvements to the Talent Bank form and the appointment process should be further considered in a follow-up effort. The Talent Bank form alone is not enough to make an appointment; the current practice of discussions with the committee chair and staff and the interview process should complete the loop and lead to "the best people." Specific recommendations and enhancements to that process include:

- Advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the context of the public body appointment process by enhancing outreach to different communities within Andover.
- Enhance usability of the Talent Bank form, including the access to it on the website. Consider linking the Talent Bank form to additional information about each body, including a member's profile or committee's work information.
- Enhance the access to and clarity of vacancies including an alert to re-appointment considerations in June.

These admittedly broad statements are broken out below into specific, actionable items.

4. <u>The Committee recommends enhancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through the Talent Bank Form and the appointment process.</u>

The Committee recommends that an additional function of the Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion might be specifically working with various communities in Andover to bring forward viable candidates to the appointing authorities of boards and committees so that Andover can continue to integrate more fully our collective goal of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our governance.

The Committee did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable to recommend a formulaic approach to this complicated and multifaceted area of consideration. We are sensitive that this area is core to the remit of the Commission on DEI, and the Committee should not infringe.

Accordingly, the Committee respectfully requests that the DEI Commission suggest potential questions that might be asked during an appointment interview to gauge whether a candidate supports the Town's commitment to anti-discriminatory behaviors. While greater board diversity may not always be visually apparent, a requirement that every successful applicant demonstrates sensitivity should be adopted and should be a factor when considering an applicant for membership on any board, committee, and commission of the Town.

The Committee also respectfully defers to the DEI Commission to provide guidance on ways to reach out equally to all residents of Andover to ensure that these residents, including those not represented in today's board memberships, are aware of opportunities.

5. **The Committee recommends that the appointment process include a two-part approach: (1) skills "specific to the committee" and (2) other skills or areas of expertise "useful to committee work in general."**

The Town Manager's Office has indicated that during interviews it seeks to identify other "talents" and may ultimately suggest another committee better suited to the applicant's skill-set. The two separate questions would call the applicant's attention to those skills specific to the committee being applied to and those skills complementary to that (or another) committee.

6. **The Committee recommends inserting additional questions within the Talent Bank form or during appointment interviews to assess the applicant's fit for a board or committee.**

Questions could include: What drew you to this committee? Why is it important for you to be on this committee? Why are committees important to the governance of the Town? What can the Town's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion mean to the committee's overall effectiveness?

These questions are meant to assess the commitment of the applicant to committee work and to the applicant's understanding of the Town's pursuit of greater diversity, equity, and inclusion. These questions are just some suggestions and are not meant to be exclusive of other questions. As the Town Manager is the key person to most interviews, s/he should be mindful of the scope of commitment of each applicant.

7. **The Committee recommends advertising vacancies on boards and committees more prominently.**

The appointing authority should not only continue to take advantage of all forms of communication but should – on the Town's website – identify the venues currently used and make use of additional platforms. Currently, vacancies are posted on the Town website -- easier navigation to these openings is suggested. In addition, the Town Manager's Office has

scheduled Facebook to put out a general, monthly solicitation of individual boards and committees by request on anticipation of a vacancy or when the Office knows of a current vacancy. Many other media options exist in addition to those regularly used.

Lengthy vacancies should be avoided if at all possible. A vacancy lingers to the detriment of the remaining committee members and may inhibit the committee's ability to gather a quorum. Accordingly, the tracking of all vacancies and the date they occurred is vital. Tracking should be maintained by the appointing authority, and a Select Board liaison should be informed so that vacancies would stay on the Town's radar.

Therefore, vacancies should be listed as soon as they occur on the website and an interview conducted as soon as possible. Should there be no applicant in the pool or when no suitable applicant can be found, the committee chair should be informed of the reason and all efforts should be made to re-advertise the vacancy. In this case, a pop-up capability, in addition to a "Vacancies" link on the Town website, if not to the Town Home Page itself.

It is expected that any vacancy be filled within three months, if not sooner. Vacancies in the case of *elected* positions vary in the way they may be filled; the Town Charter should be consulted in these cases.

8. <u>The Committee recommends that only four employee positions remain subject to Select Board confirmation: Deputy Town Manager, Police Chief, Fire Rescue Chief, and Finance Director.</u>

Currently, all Town employees, except the Town Accountant, are appointed by the Town Manager and subject to confirmation by the Select Board. This means that seasonal employees, such as lifeguards, custodial staff, and hundreds of others of employees require approval from the Select Board. The Committee finds this practice to be non-sensical.

Only a few of the senior Town officials, who are appointed by the Town Manager, should need to be confirmed by the Select Board. The status quo practice where the Select Board confirms all employees improperly obscures the line between policy-making by the Select Board and Administration by the Town Manager. Further, since the Select Board plays no role in the interview and evaluation of candidates, it has little basis on which to approve or disapprove the Town Manager's employee appointments. The current practice also is at odds with the School Committee's practice of not being involved in personnel confirmations within its purview.

Finally, the status quo amounts to an odd arrangement where hirings are confirmed by the Select Board while no other personnel decisions, including terminations, are governed by the Select Board.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Select Board only confirm the Town Manager's appointments for the following positions: Deputy Town Manager, Police Chief, Fire Rescue Chief, and Finance Director. These positions are extremely important to the conduct of the Town government and therefore warrant the scrutiny attached to a Select Board confirmation process.

9. **The Committee recommends that the Town be sensitive to "over-compartmentalization" in order to achieve the optimal level of granularity of government.**

The Committee believes that over-compartmentalization of government through the imprudent proliferation of boards and committees is likely to reduce the overall effectiveness and efficiency of government and therefore should be avoided. Any organizational boundary introduces hand-offs and inefficiency. Also, the Town must be mindful that boards and committees not "share" jurisdiction, the occurrence of which may lead to conflict (as opposed to constructive tension). Further, when boards and committees are given small purviews, which may result from the proliferation of public bodies, those boards and committees may tend to operate without a larger perspective and Town-wide best interests.

The recommendation in this regard is merely that a skeptical lens be applied by the authorities in Town with the authority to create new public bodies.

10. The Committee does not recommend that a Water Commission be established.

Currently the Select Board acts as the Water Commission and the Committee believes that this arrangement makes sense for several reasons: (1) it raises the profile of important water issues given that the Select Board is the highest authority in the Town (apart from Town Meeting); (2) the current management of the Town's water mains and sewer system is responsible and aggressive in terms of the aggressive replacement schedule; and (3) allowing the Select Board to set water rates brings those rates into coordination with the tax rates (which the Select Board also sets).

Furthermore, the Town currently has a competent and professional Department of Public Works and Water Treatment Plant, and creating a separate water commission may be destabilizing to water-related policymaking.

11. The Committee recommends that the Board of Health be expanded from three members to five members.

Studying the recommendation of the Public Health Director, the Committee noted that the practice of having five-member Boards of Health is common in Massachusetts. This expansion will allow the board to do its important work, and ease the challenge of convening a quorum for its meetings.

12. The Committee recommends no change to the one-year term for Moderator.

A one-year term for Moderator promotes accountability given that voters have the opportunity to choose the best Moderator for the moment on an annual, per-Town Meeting basis (excluding Special Town Meetings). Also, since the Moderator appoints approximately three Finance

Committee members each year, the one-year term allows voters to endorse or reject an approach to Finance Committee appointments before a majority of the committee can be appointed.

13. <u>The Committee recommends retaining the current method of appointment of the Finance Committee by the Moderator.</u>

Municipalities can choose to elect Finance Committee members or have them appointed by the Moderator or a panel comprised of multiple stakeholders (e.g., Town Manager, School Committee, Select Board, Town Clerk).

The Committee supported retaining the current method of appointment for Finance Committee members for the following reasons.

In Andover, the Moderator makes Finance Committee appointments due to the Moderator's and the Finance Committee's shared role in Town Meeting: The Moderator manages Town Meeting and its deliberations; the Finance Committee functions solely to advise Town Meeting on the financial articles on the Warrant.

The Moderator appoints Finance Committee members because the Moderator is an objective actor in the goings-on of Town Meeting and therefore in the best position to appoint the Town's financial watchdog. The Moderator, unlike the Select Board, School Committee or other Town officials, has no stake, other than as a resident, in Town Meeting articles.

To the extent the Moderator's appointment power in this regard appears unchecked, the Moderator is unique in Town government n that voters select the Moderator each year through the Annual Town Election. Therefore, any given Moderator can only appoint three members of the nine-member committee before voters have the opportunity to elect or "un-elect" the Moderator.

14. <u>The Committee recommends that the Planning Board retain its five-year terms.</u>

The Planning Board should retain its five-year terms, and not adopt three-year terms, given the large amount of time members require to learn their work, and given that permit applications often take many months, or even years, to resolve.

The Planning Board must act in a quasi-judicial capacity to make complex decisions on lengthy special permit applications, variance applications, and Town Meeting articles. It often takes Planning Board members a significant amount of time to becomes comfortable with this range of substance. Shortening these members' terms risks losing public servants just as they are becoming most comfortable in their roles.

Also, given that special permit hearings and decisions can continue for many months and even years, shortening term lengths risks the stability of the group of members allowed under law to

vote on these permits. If a quorum of members who have conducted hearings on a permit is a lost due to turnover in membership, the hearings would have to be conducted again to the detriment of the Town and landowners.

15. <u>The Committee recommends that members of the Planning Board continue to be appointed and not elected.</u>

Planning Board members should continue to be appointed and not elected for three reasons:

First, qualified residents who would serve if appointed may not run for election – this would shrink the pool of residents who are willing to serve on this critical board.

Second, the Planning Board operates in a quasi-judicial capacity that is inappropriate for the campaigning and fundraising that attends local elections.

Third, the entire "ecosystem" of Andover's land use boards and commissions is appointed and not elected. Making the Planning Board an outlier in this regard would put it at odds with the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Preservation Commission, the Conservation Commission, the Zoning Bylaw Study Committee and the Design Review Board.

16. <u>The Committee does not recommend any changes to the Zoning Board of Appeals or the Board of Registrars of Voters.</u>

It is not within the power of the Town, or this Committee, to alter the method of appointment for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) or the Board of Registrars of Voters (BOR). The ZBA and BOR are exceptions to the appointment norm in that, with these boards, the Select Board controls the appointment completely. (With almost all other appointed boards, the Town Manager makes the appointment and the Select Board takes a confirmatory vote.) These two outliers follow appointment procedures prescribed by State law.

17. <u>The Committee does not recommend term limits for members of Town boards or committees or any change to the length of their terms.</u>

The Committee believes that Andover's boards and committees should comprise the best talent available and that sufficient opportunities should exist for a qualified resident to serve. However, the committee does not support imposition of term limits nor any change to the current length of appointments as the mechanism to achieve either goal. Limits imposed woodenly may force removal of experienced, knowledgeable volunteers who have learned over time how best to function on boards or who might have spent many years learning the technical areas of their respective boards' work. We cannot assume that replacements would be found who would make a similar contribution to high-performing incumbents. Finally, limits might force removal of key contributors or committee leadership at inopportune or even critical junctures in a board's work. Term limits are, simply put, too blunt an instrument.

As an alternative to fixed term limits, in order to give other residents the opportunity to serve on a board and provide a healthy degree of turnover, the Committee recommends that, when the Town Manager's Office notifies an incumbent member (usually in April of each year) that the member's term is ending, that member should be required to respond with a statement that the member wishes to continue to serve. The member should then be evaluated in the context of and in comparison to other applicants. This strikes an appropriate balance between retaining qualified, experienced, and enthusiastic volunteers with the understanding that no one is entitled to automatic reappointment and must demonstrate why they should retain their position. For practical expediency, the Committee does not suggest that an incumbent should necessarily be formally interviewed as part of this evaluation; this should be at the discretion of the appointing authority.

During the interviews of committee and board chairpersons and members, conducted by members of this Committee, many suggestions were made relating specifically to the various boards in question. Some of these could also be applied to other boards, such as a policy requiring an annual rotation of the chair of all committees. However, due to the fact that the full list of boards has different responsibilities requiring various levels of training, time needs, and individual outside commitments, the acknowledgment of these differences might be best served by the committee members themselves, perhaps during an annual assessment of the committee efficiency and ways to strengthen the procedure required by each of these valuable town bodies.

ii. Communication.

Efficient, effective, transparent and consistent communications are the foundation of every well-run organization, public or private. The Town has dedicated itself to building a robust communications network with its residents. Yet, almost from the outset of the Committee's research in the fall of 2019, at its in-person and virtual forums and in individual comments submitted by residents, a consistent thread was evident.

Many Andover residents strongly feel that there is a significant lack of awareness about basic Town government decisions and that residents simply do not know "what's going on." That perception, accurate or not, is not unique to Andover, as the local print news media in many communities, Andover included, has been in serious decline for a generation due to diminished advertising and subscription revenues. While this private sector challenge is clearly beyond the Committee's charge, addressing options for enhanced Town-resident communication was a high priority of the Committee.

The Town has made considerable strides to expand its communications with residents. The Town's website was redesigned in 2017. It now includes a 3-1-1 "Andover Central," a one-on-one response to resident needs. The Customer Service Center is a staffed customer service and information center, a one stop response to a resident's needs. The Town sends emailed "News Flashes" to any interested resident for an array of personally-selected topics, including advance notices of board meetings, agendas, forums, road closures, snow events, etc.

The Town's recent focus has been to integrate this comprehensive platform with the social media that are commonly used in most households today. With the help of a social media task force, the growth in Town use of social media has been remarkable.

Despite what many consider to be an industry-leading network, improved communications surfaced as an issue to be addressed in essentially every public forum conducted by the Committee. When asked to elaborate on their concerns, the residents expressed the following:

- How might the Town enhance awareness of recent and forthcoming events, meetings, government issues, etc.?
- What steps can be taken to modernize communications between the Town and its residents?
- Would Andover benefit from a robust non-governmental news gathering service organization?
- Does the Town have an obligation to enhance civic awareness of its residents? If yes, who would be responsible?
- What steps would be required to ensure that residents are properly consulted in projects and initiatives?

Further discussions among the Committee and additional public comment added the following perceived areas of improvement in Town-resident communication:

- Information is not received or available early in the decision-making process.
- Information is limited on the timing of when key decisions on major issues are being discussed and decided upon
- The absence of the reporting, debate and opinion sections of a responsible local newspaper was apparent to several.
- The absence of a "full debate" between supporters and opponents of any particular Town decision topic.
- The inability to discuss an issue with a "real person," Be they a Town employee, appointed or elected official, or Town Meeting warrant article proponent.
- The recording of many meetings and forums and their archiving is to be applauded. But once a recording is archived, it is sometimes difficult to identify the precise time in a long meeting when an issue was discussed without listening to the entire tape.

Each of these issues is discussed below with recommendations for improvement.

Enhanced Notification of Discussions and Decisions.

The Town currently employs three calendars: the *Main Calendar,* the *Community Events, Programs Calendar* and the *School Calendar*. The Main Calendar identifies the Town's formal meetings with a link to the website home page. The Community Events and Programs Calendar contains all the events and programs planned in the next month. Content is provided by the Town, by not-for-profit organizations and by for-profit organizations sponsoring a charitable event. Residents can select all or part of the list of participating entities, thus tailoring their

monthly calendars to their respective interests. The School Calendar is of course focused on School Department events.

None of the calendars provide a clear notification of the issues to be discussed or decisions to be made in the ensuing month or two. A resident can get an indication of when an issue is going to be discussed only by manually tracking particular agendas and minutes. This tracking can be difficult, often consuming considerable time and effort and may require a laborious review of meeting minutes/meeting videos.

The Committee recommends that the Town prepare and distribute a bi-monthly summary of the issues/discussions/decisions planned for the ensuing month (called *Precis* for purposes of this report). These Precis would be informed by reports prepared by the boards, committees, commissions, task forces and project managers responsible for the topics and matters to be included in the Precis. Each summary, including actions taken or still pending, should be factual (i.e., without advocacy), three or four sentences at most, and distributed to all voters through the Town website, News Flash function, and social media. Voters should be able to tailor the monthly Precis to the topics of their choice. Precis should permit residents to easily unsubscribe. It may be advisable to integrate Precis with one or more of the existing calendars. Precis should contain a clear linkage to the relevant meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and archived videos.

The Town should adopt a standard format for the calendars and Precis, providing guidance to anyone submitting to the calendars and to Precis. The standard format should give clear guidance for the content as well as particular guidance on how to better "tag" all archived material to aid in retrieval

Also, The Town should dedicate a full-time staff person to coordinate the myriad efforts, current and new, around internal and external communication. While an additional full-time position is likely not feasible, reallocation of a current position for this purpose is important. This coordinator should report directly to the Town Manager's Office. This is necessary given the size of the Town's budget, the activity of the municipal organization, the expectations of an educated electorate, and the growing complexity of the community.

Modernize Communications.

Several residents urged the Town to employ more modern technology and techniques to communicate with today's households. In fact, the Town has focused much of its recent attention on the dissemination of information using social media: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These efforts have been very successful. Since early 2020, social media accounts signed up to receive a variety of reports from Town have increased 77 percent. Subscribers to News Flashes[24] have doubled and routine posts range from 1,000-5,000 accounts; critical messages were posted to 10,000-15,000 accounts.

[24] A "News Flash" is an email blast sent by the Town administration to subscribers on a myriad of topics, customized by each subscriber from a menu of subjects, ranging from public works road closures to Select Board agendas.

The development of Precis and improved "tagging" of archived information will further enhance the use of social media. The flexibility employed by the Town's communication model permits the user to frame the content they wish to receive.

The Town's adopted model also decentralizes site maintenance, thereby reducing the burden of preparing the Precis.

The Committee recommends that the Town continue to place a high priority on the expanded use of social media to disseminate critical information to town residents.

Non-governmental News Gathering Organization.

Several residents commented on the absence of a robust news bulletin/newspaper independent of the Town that provides coverage of Town activities on a frequent basis. This news reporting provides residents with an on-going discussion of most major issues from an independent lens. Typically, these news organizations are for-profit entities. The for-profit news industry has been severely challenged by social media and on-line advertising and in many cases, newspapers are struggling to stay in business.

In response, several communities have encouraged the development of a non-governmental news gathering service that provides the desired third-party independence. Some of these organizations have the benefit of a local sponsor such as the Chamber of Commerce or the League of Women Voters. Others meet their expenses by a modest advertising stream. In some communities, residents have formed a local non-profit news provider that covers various town events and governing decision-making. It is important that such an enterprise not be sponsored by the Town. Independence is essential in such a service.

The Committee recommends that the community encourage the development of a non-governmental enterprise to gather news relevant to residents. There are several examples of such enterprises already in existence elsewhere around New England and the United States.

Enhancing Civic Awareness.

Andover is a sought-after community because of its location, downtown, conservation land, high-quality education, and its reputation as a well-run community. As a result, many new families move into town each year. Often, these new residents have little or no exposure to Andover's form of governance, i.e., Open Town Meeting. Therefore, it is in the Town's interests to ensure that its electorate is well informed on matters of governance. Open Town Meeting is the purest form of democracy, but participation can be confusing.

Andover has enjoyed decades of successful growth using the Open Town Meeting form of governance. Much of this success is attributable to the hundreds of volunteer citizens who commit countless hours serving on boards and committees advising the Town's leadership and legislature on matters of good government. It is imperative that Andover continue to encourage this outstanding resident engagement. An educated electorate is a participatory electorate.

The Committee recommends that Andover conduct a comprehensive civic education program. It should start with "Welcome to Andover" (OTM 101) module and follow with a more in-depth instruction of how Open Town Meeting works and how to participate. The Town is currently considering the development of a "Citizens Academy." The Committee supports this initiative.

These latter modules may be integrated with the modules developed for the civics education now required of all Massachusetts high school students. Resources at Merrimack College may be very helpful in the development of adult learning modules.

Enhancing Residents' Engagement in Projects & Initiatives.

The Town has a model for enhancing resident engagement in key projects. That model should be proliferated and used in major Town initiatives.

When faced with the management of a large or complex capital building project, the Town forms a "Building Committee" to provide advice and outreach as the project moves forward. The "Building Committee" itself has representatives from several of the key project stakeholders. The Building Committee conducts a number of public forums to seek input from the community. A project portal is built with access granted to all. Elected officials are briefed of progress on a regular basis. Representatives of the principal Town administrative departments are appointed to the committee ex-officio to provide improved internal coordination.

There are dozens of projects and initiatives executed each year that do not include the aggressive outreach and communication efforts undertaken by a project with an assigned Building Committee. A sound outreach program for these projects is essential.

Including all of the projects in the Precis ensures that the decisions and status of all projects are conveyed to a large population of potential stakeholders. Employing the model that the Town as adopted for newsletters permits each resident to tailor their communications with the Town to only those projects/initiatives that the resident is interested in following. But the "push" attributes of Precis ensures that a broad base is notified.

In summary, the Committee recommends the following:

1. The Town should dedicate a full-time staff person to coordinate the myriad efforts, current and new, around internal and external communication. While an additional full-time position is likely not feasible, reallocation of a current position for this purpose is important. This coordinator should report directly to the Town Manager's Office. This is necessary given the size of the Town's budget, the activity of the municipal organization, the expectations of an educated electorate, and the growing complexity of the community.
2. A regular digest, or Precis, should be provided to residents conveying information about the administration and public bodies. This resource would provide "tagged" information sources and should be customizable per resident interests (as the News Flash service is).

Public bodies should be required to submit information to this resource to ensure that it is not exclusively administration-focused and administration-driven.

3. Website videos of public body meetings should be "tagged" to allow residents to quickly and easily skip to portions of meetings that interest them.
4. New residents should be welcomed to Andover with information about our Open Town Meeting form of government.
5. A "Citizens Academy" should provide in-depth information to residents about different aspects of Andover's government and civic system.
6. Civics information should be shared with residents through inserts included in excise tax bills.
7. Enhance content provided by social media, included "tagged" videos and minutes, etc.
8. More aggressively advertise the News Flash service.
9. Wherever possible, boards and committees should live-stream and broadcast their meetings, and take public comment from remote participants.
10. Encourage other stakeholders to explore the facilitation of a non-governmental news gathering operation. This entity may be a nonprofit organization or a public benefit corporation.

C. Tier Two Secondary Issues

The Committee then turned to seven topics comprising tier two of its non-form of government study. This was the final chapter of the Committee's study.

i. Long-Term Financial Planning.

The Committee investigated the Town's processes for long-term, strategic, and financial planning. This included meeting with the Town's Finance Director, Office of the Town Manager, and Finance Committee members. These conversations and public presentations touched upon the entire capital and operating budget process. Paramount to the Committee is that the Town's governance facilitates prudent long-term planning that mitigates financial risks.

The Committee recommends that long-term, financially sustainable fiscal planning and forecasting be proposed by the Town Manager, who may consult with the Revenue & Expenditure Task Force, to the Select Board and used to inform the Capital Improvement Program, budget plan, and other fiscally relevant matters (e.g., land acquisitions). Such planning and forecasting should be done with a 10-year horizon and updated every five years. The plan should account for necessary fiscal expenditures, anticipated revenues, appropriate levels of indebtedness, etc.

ii. Government Business Process.

The Committee investigated a range of topics related to how the Town's governance processes affect, positively and negatively, the ability of businesses to operate in Andover. The Committee spoke with Town staff in various departments and divisions and spoke with local businesses.

Much of the Town's business processes fall outside the scope of the Committee's charge. However, the Committee recommends that steps be taken to improve governance-related processes that impact Andover businesses. For example, to expedite the issuance of permits, special permits, variances, and licenses, we recommend that Town public bodies with respective jurisdictions coordinate their reviews and approvals to allow an efficient process that does not sacrifice thoroughness, diligence, compliance with the law, and protection of the community's interests. By operating with an understanding of the larger regulatory context, public bodies can help businesses that often face challenges to acquire the municipal permissions needed to thrive and serve the community.

Also, the Town should enhance communication with and education of businesses about the municipal regulatory framework. Often, businesses, particularly small ones, do not understand the land use permissions granted, the inter-departmental review process, Town Meeting's role and procedures, the role of advisory boards (e.g., the Design Review Board) vs. permit-granting boards (the Zoning Board of Appeals), et cetera. The Town's Community Development & Planning Department, Town Clerk's Office, and Director of Business, Arts & Culture are resources to help educate businesses on how to navigate local government.

We further recommend that the Town Manager or his/her designee periodically report to the Select Board, not less than once every two years, on the state of and improvements to the Town's business processes.

Other improvements are, generally, either outside the purview of the Committee or are already being implemented in Andover.

iii. The Timing of Annual Town Elections.

The Committee noted that the status quo practice of holding Annual Town Elections on the fourth Tuesday in March and Town Meeting in early May presents challenges to the governance system. In particular, new officials elected to their seats in March have very little time before Town Meeting to apprise themselves of complex budget, zoning, and bylaw articles that will be decided at the May Annual Town Meeting. And, even when newly elected officials educate themselves, they nonetheless represent different political actors than the ones who led the multi-month process culminating in the imminent Town Meeting.

The Committee discussed whether to change the order and timing in which the Annual Town Election and Annual Town Meeting take place each year. The Committee considered three

options: (1) retain the status quo, (2) place the Annual Town Election after Annual Town Meeting, or (3) set the effective date for elected office-taking after Annual Town Meeting.

The sequence of events was the Committee's primary focus and the particular dates of the Annual Town Election and Annual Town Meeting (ATM) was a secondary question of less importance. The Committee considered the following options:

1. Status Quo: Election and Office-Taking Followed by Annual Town Meeting

a. Con – Newly elected officials may be uninformed on the ATM warrant articles.
b. Con – Newly elected officials won't be the "players" who formulated ATM warrant articles.

2. Change Election to After Annual Town Meeting

a. Pro – Avoids newly elected officials at ATM who may be uninformed on the ATM warrant articles.
b. Pro – Avoids newly elected officials at ATM who are not the "players" who formulated ATM warrant articles.
c. Con – Putting the election after ATM injects intense electoral politics into ATM.
d. Con – An election in May or June (i.e., after ATM) may run up against spring scheduling conflicts.

3. Keep Election Before Annual Town Meeting and Change Effective Date of Office-Taking to after Annual Town Meeting

a. Proposed Dates:
    i. Election – 1st Tuesday in May or keep at 4th Tuesday in March
    ii. ATM – 2nd Monday in May
    iii. Effective Date of Offices– 3rd Monday in May
a. Pro – Avoids newly elected officials at ATM who may be uninformed on the ATM warrant articles.
b. Pro – Avoids newly elected officials at ATM who are not the "players" who formulated ATM warrant articles.
c. Pro – By keeping the election first, it keeps ATM from becoming a campaign rally for local candidates.
d. Con – Elected officials may be defeated at the election and therefore be "lame ducks" at ATM. But all levels of government allow defeated officials to exercise authority after the election and before they take office.

The Committee recommends "option 3" as the best option for the reasons outlined above.

iv. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

The Committee acknowledges the important steps that the Town and its Select Board have taken toward addressing the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. At this time, the Committee did not wish to infringe – nor change – the focus that we are currently witnessing.

The Committee supports the work of the new Commission on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and are hopeful that the breadth of backgrounds on the Commission will make it well-placed to lead the community to a better understanding of these issues.

The Charge of the Commission is as follows: *The Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion seeks to combat the realities of racism and intolerance in Andover by supporting programs, initiatives, education, outreach, policies and institutional change which contribute to an inclusive Andover; a community that embraces tolerance, inclusiveness and respect for all.*

The Committee applauds the new Town division, its focus on diversity and inclusion, and its commitment to work with all parts of Town government and our community. The division will provide resources and will take dedicated, thoughtful actions and initiatives to promote goals we aspire to in our town. The division will be part of the Community Services Department – Andover DIVERSE (Diversity, Inclusion, Values, Respect, Support and Education) whose purpose is to advance community-driven initiatives and engagement.

The Committee hopes these steps are just the beginning of an ongoing understanding of our Town, our country, and the world that we live in. The Committee further hopes that these active and vigorous efforts will impact all communities and will reach all levels of governance throughout the Town.

v. Residency Requirement for Town Manager.

In the past the question of whether the Town Manager and other senior Town officials should be required to reside in Andover has been raised. Andover still requires its Town Manager to be a resident of the town within a certain period of time after commencement of employment. In light of advances in technology, escalating housing costs, and the reality that Town Manager candidates likely have working spouses to consider, the Committee asked its consultant, Community Paradigm Associates, to review residency requirements in Massachusetts cities and towns. Their report concluded that while residency requirements were common 20 or more years ago, very few communities currently maintain a residency requirement for their manager/administrator.

There is no central registry of information on this topic, but available data[25] suggests that less than a dozen Massachusetts communities retain a residency requirement for its chief executive.

[25] Appendix 7 contains research prepared by Community Paradigm Associates and considered by the Committee.

Many communities, including Hudson and Blackstone, removed those requirements in 2021, as they substantially impede recruitment and significantly limit the potential pool of applicants who did not want to relocate their families.

The Committee had a robust discussion regarding retaining or removing the residency requirement. Some felt that officials who live in Andover have more ownership and commitment to the town. Others felt that managers might act more objectively if they do not live within Andover, as they would have no personal vested interest in particular outcomes. All acknowledged that the advances in technology, especially given the ability to instantly connect via remote meeting platforms, substantially negated any concerns about accessibility to residents or Town staff. Also, the Committee is concerned that Andover's expensive housing market would dissuade potential candidates from entering a search for a job that requires buying housing, potentially for a family, in Andover. Candidates with working spouses or partners, other personal matters or school-aged children may decide that applying to lead Andover is simply not worth the disruption to their lives.

While the benefit and allure of a resident manager was not lost on the Committee, the Committee felt that no consideration is more important than attracting the best and most capable candidates to lead the Town government. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Town remove the existing residency requirement for the Town Manager.

vi. Ranked-Choice Voting.

Ranked-choice voting is not widely used in this country in elections at any level, but it is emerging. Some contend that it makes the results of elections more representative of the will of the voters, especially in elections in which there are large numbers of candidates and split votes are likely to influence the outcome. Others contend that the added complexity makes it harder for voters to comprehend the process and thereby potentially disenfranchises them and also stresses the administration of the election. Thus, the Committee posed two questions: (a) do the benefits outweigh the disadvantages for Andover local elections or *vice versa*, and (b) might ranked-choice voting potentially impact sufficient Andover elections to even justify the additional complexity?

The Committee studied the results of all 15[26] Select Board and 14 School Committee elections since 2008.[27] It was found that there were enough candidates in nine of these elections to support ranked-choice voting and that there were sufficient votes cast in four of these for the candidates who were not elected for it to be mathematically possible for one of the unelected candidates to overtake a winner. To further refine these results, the Committee considered the dynamics of each of the four elections in detail.

[26] There were two separate votes for Select Board on the ballot in 2001, one to elect a member for one year and one to elect a member for two years. They had different candidates so have been treated as two elections. Appendix 8 contains the research considered by the Committee.

[27] The results of all local elections since 2008 are available on the Town website and these were used as the sample.

- In one of these, three candidates for two seats received almost a third of the votes each, although there were sufficient votes amongst the losers to overcome the very small margins between them. The candidates stood on very similar platforms, and the Committee felt that each was similarly attractive to the electorate. Second-choice votes might have been cast in such a way that any two of the three candidates might have won under ranked-choice voting. The Committee felt that it was possible that the outcome of this election might have been different had Andover used ranked-choice voting. That said, as the three candidates were very similar, one might argue whether the will of the voters would have been better expressed in this case.
- In a second, again three candidates for two seats, the margin was larger but not unsurmountable by any means. However, the third-placed candidate stood on a very different platform to any of the other candidates, while the remaining candidates were broadly similar. Thus, the Committee thought that it unlikely that the outcome would have been different under ranked-choice voting, but could not categorically discount this.
- The Committee did not believe that ranked-choice voting could affect the outcome of the other two elections. In one, two very-well regarded incumbents were re-elected whereas all challengers were standing in their first election. The margin in the other election was so high that it was only just mathematically possible for ranked-choice voting to affect the outcome.

As it is possible that ranked-choice voting might have led to a different outcome in only one or at most two of the 29 elections studied, the broader question of whether benefits of ranked-choice voting outweigh the disadvantages for Andover local elections or *vice versa* is rendered moot. The Committee recommends that ranked-choice voting should not be pursued further in Andover at this time.[28]

vii. Recall of Elected Officials.

Andover does not have a provision in its Charter or Bylaws for voters to remove an elected official. The Committee was somewhat reluctant to recommend a change in this regard in what might be viewed as proposing a solution without an underlying problem. But on balance, Committee believes a recall mechanism is appropriate.

Several Committee members expressed mixed views on the merits of a recall provision. The Committee detected no demand by Andover voters for a mechanism to remove incumbent elected officials. The Committee was also concerned that any mechanism to remove elected officials could be abused for political purposes, by single-issue constituencies, or in an attempt to overturn often difficult decisions by the very officials who were elected to make those decisions. A recall provision might dissuade talented residents from seeking elected office. It might also have a chilling effect on decision-making.

[28] In 2020, Question 2 on the State ballot asked voters to approve ranked-choice voting for State elections. This was defeated 55% to 45%, with Andover voters also voting 55% to 45% against. This information is provided purely as background, the Committee did not feel bound by this result

Conversely, Committee members noted that the Town currently has no formal mechanism, other than public persuasion, to remove an elected official even for the most egregious infractions, such as criminal offenses or other actions deemed so significant that an official no longer has the ability or mandate to perform his or her duties. Although no instance has been seen in which such a mechanism would have been invoked if available in Andover, there have been several examples in other communities. Indeed, many of Andover's peer communities have recall provisions.

On balance, the Committee felt that some mechanism to remove elected officials should be put in place, and that it is important for this to happen before it is needed. The Town should not wait until a serious problem has arisen and only then attempt to develop a remedy. In local government, one actor can have an enormous influence on the lives of residents – if an actor is unfit to exercise that enormous authority, there must in prudence be a remedy.

While a recall provision is the common mechanism, the Committee also considered other options. Of these, automatic removal of elected officials in specific situations was the most interesting. However, the Committee acknowledged that this would not be practically feasible. For example, one might postulate that an elected official should be automatically removed from office if convicted of a serious criminal offense. However, in practice, it would be improper to remove the official until that official had been convicted and exercised a right to appeal, which may be long after the alleged offense.

As another example, while repeated abusive or disruptive behavior during meetings would seem to be reasonable grounds for removal, it would not be possible to define in legislation what would constitute these behaviors. Thus, the Committee determined that a recall mechanism is the only practical solution, but that there must be an exceedingly high barrier for initiation to prevent abuse.

The Committee formed a subcommittee to review the potential problems a recall provision may generate, what criteria should be established to initiate a recall, how many voter signatures might be required, and the process by which an election to replace a recalled official would take place. The Committee reviewed the recall provisions in several town charters, applicable State law, and conducted extensive debate on the benefits and risks of recommending that Andover adopt a recall provision.

After being provided this background research,[29] the Committee voted 6-1 to support in principle the adoption of a recall provision that establishes a high level of voter engagement in order to proceed with recalling an elected official. These recommendations are similar to those followed by other towns and are consistent with the minimum requirement for an Andover resident to file signatures to run for office. The Committee recommends that the following thresholds, or similarly high thresholds, apply in relation to an effort to recall an elected public official. Note that each of the four phases of a recall are described separately.

[29] Appendix 9 contains research prepared by Community Paradigm Associates and considered by the Committee.

1. To receive petition pages/provide notice of recall attempt – 50 signatures, or whatever is required under State law to become a candidate for local election. The notice must state the grounds for recall. However, there should be no limitation on which grounds can support a recall effort as any limitation would be difficult to legislate and easy to circumvent. Separate petitions are required for each elected official targeted for recall. Within business five days of certification, the Town Clerk will issue blank petition pages to petitioners.

2. To call a Special Recall Election – Certified signatures from 30% of registered voters (today around 7800 voters) must be provided. Petition pages must be returned by petitioners within 20 days of the pages being given to the petitioners by the Town Clerk. There would be no need to specify any geographical distribution to prevent one aggrieved locality invoking the process, as the required total number of signatures could only be reached with broad support from across the town.

3. To qualify a candidate for the ballot – The standard ballot/candidate threshold for local elections (today 50 signatures) applies.

4. To recall & elect replacement official – There would be two votes on the recall election ballot: the first determines whether the elected official should be recalled; the second determines who, if a recall has been approved, should be elected to the now-open seat. A simple majority of votes is required to recall the elected official(s); and the candidate receiving the most votes is elected to serve the balance of the unexpired term. The recalled candidate remains on the ballot in the resolution of question two.

Ultimately, the Committee recognized that State and federal governments, as well as many Massachusetts communities, provide a means by which an elected official can be removed and replaced. As a matter of logic and good governance, Andover voters should not be absolutely deprived of the ability to remove an official elected by voters.

Section 8. Conclusion.

The Committee members have been honored by the work entrusted in their care over the last two and a half years. We thank the Town Manager and Select Board for creating this Committee, supporting its work, and receiving this report.

We also wish to thank the dozens of Andover residents who met with Committee members, attended forums, spoke at Committee meetings, submitted written comments, and followed this Committee's winding journey. The questions, suggestions, and comments from residents prompted new and deeper investigations by the Committee and made this effort eminently more successful.

We also wish to thank Jamie Doherty in the Town Clerk's Office for administratively supporting the Committee during a time when a Presidential Election cycle and COVID-19 already presented her with a full plate or work.

Through 68 Committee and subcommittee meetings, we have approached the Committee's charge with our best good faith effort. Our sincerest hope is that this report will give Andover pride in its governance and a roadmap for continued improvement.

Report of the

Town Governance Study Committee

Appendices

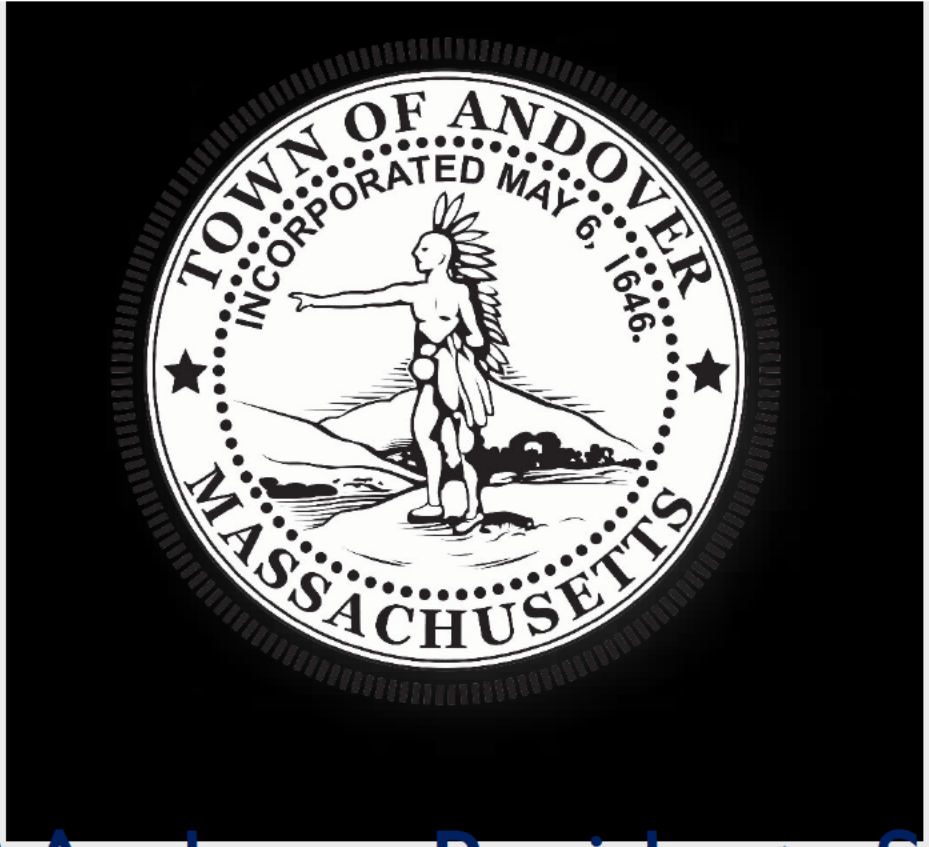
Appendix 1 – United States Census Bureau Information About Andover and Peer Communities

See following page.

	Massachustts	Andover	Arlington	Bedford	Burlington	Chelmsford	Lexington	Needham	N. Andover	Reading	Wellesley	Westford	Winchester
Population	7,029,917	36,569	46,308	14,383	26,377	36,392	34,454	32,091	30,915	25,518	29,550	24,643	22,970
Population Change 2010-2020 (%)	7.3	10.1	8.1	8	7.7	7.7	9.7	11	9	3.1	5.6	10.1	7.5
Persons Under 18 (%)	19.6	24.2	21.3	25	20.5	20.7	27.1	26.9	24.2	24.2	25	26.3	28.6
Persons Over 65 (%)	17	14.8	16.7	17.3	19.7	18.8	19.6	18.9	15.9	17.5	14.8	13	17.7
White Population (%)	71.1	75.8	75.8	74.2	71.5	85.2	62.7	82.6	81.4	91.1	76.6	76.1	79.5
Black Population (%)	9	2.7	3.1	4.1	4.5	0.9	1.3	3.1	3.6	0.4	2.9	0.9	0.3
Asian Population (%)	7.2	14.7	12.3	15	16.3	9.2	30.1	8.9	6.1	4.4	12.4	19.8	14.6
Hispanic/Latino Population (%)	12.4	4.9	4.9	3.8	3.1	3.3	2.1	3.2	6.3	3	5.1	1.5	2.1
Foreign Born Population (%)	16.8	17.4	19.6	18.8	23.8	10.9	28.8	13.9	11.9	8.2	16.9	15.4	18
Language Other Than English Spoken (%)	23.6	20.3	20.8	19.2	26.4	14	33.6	17	15.1	8.6	20	17.7	21.8
Owner-Occupied Housing (%)	62.4	81.3	58	73.9	73.6	84.3	81.7	83.9	71.4	84.1	82.1	86.2	86.4
Number of Households	2,617,497	12,801	19,065	5,312	10,001	13,564	11,811	10,801	11,112	9,191	8,449	8,571	7,884
Persons per Household	2.52	2.67	2.36	2.58	2.76	2.58	2.79	2.79	2.67	2.71	2.85	2.84	2.85
Median Home Value	$ 381,600	$ 620,500	$ 642,200	$655,300	$ 533,800	$ 400,500	$ 889,700	$ 855,300	$ 505,400	$562,800	$1,149,100	$ 531,300	$ 943,800
Bachelor's Degree (%)	43.7	74.5	70.9	71.8	56.9	56.5	84.7	76	56.9	64.4	83.8	67.4	77.3
Percent of Households in Civilian Workforce	67.2	67.9	71.5	66.8	66	67.9	64.8	65.4	66.7	70.9	59.3	70.1	66
Median Household Income	$ 81,215	$ 151,334	$ 108,389	$128,354	$ 118,721	$ 116,111	$ 186,201	$ 165,547	$ 108,070	$132,731	$ 197,132	$ 144,917	$ 163,323
Persons in Poverty (%)	9.4	4.1	5.2	2.9	3.8	3.6	3.2	2.7	5.6	2.8	4.4	2.1	2.3

Appendix 2 – UMASS Lowell Center for Public Opinion Andover Residents' Survey, Governance Insights

See following page.



2019 Andover Residents Survey
Town Governance Insights

May 20, 2020

TOPICS

1. Methodology
2. Election Participation
3. Town Meeting Attendance
4. Reasons for Not Attending Town Meeting
5. Opinions on Town Meeting
6. Board/Committee Meeting Attendance & Viewing
7. Media Usage Preferences
8. Biggest Challenges Facing Andover Over the Next 5 Years

METHODOLOGY

Analysis done by UMASS Lowell Center for Public Opinion

3500-person sample

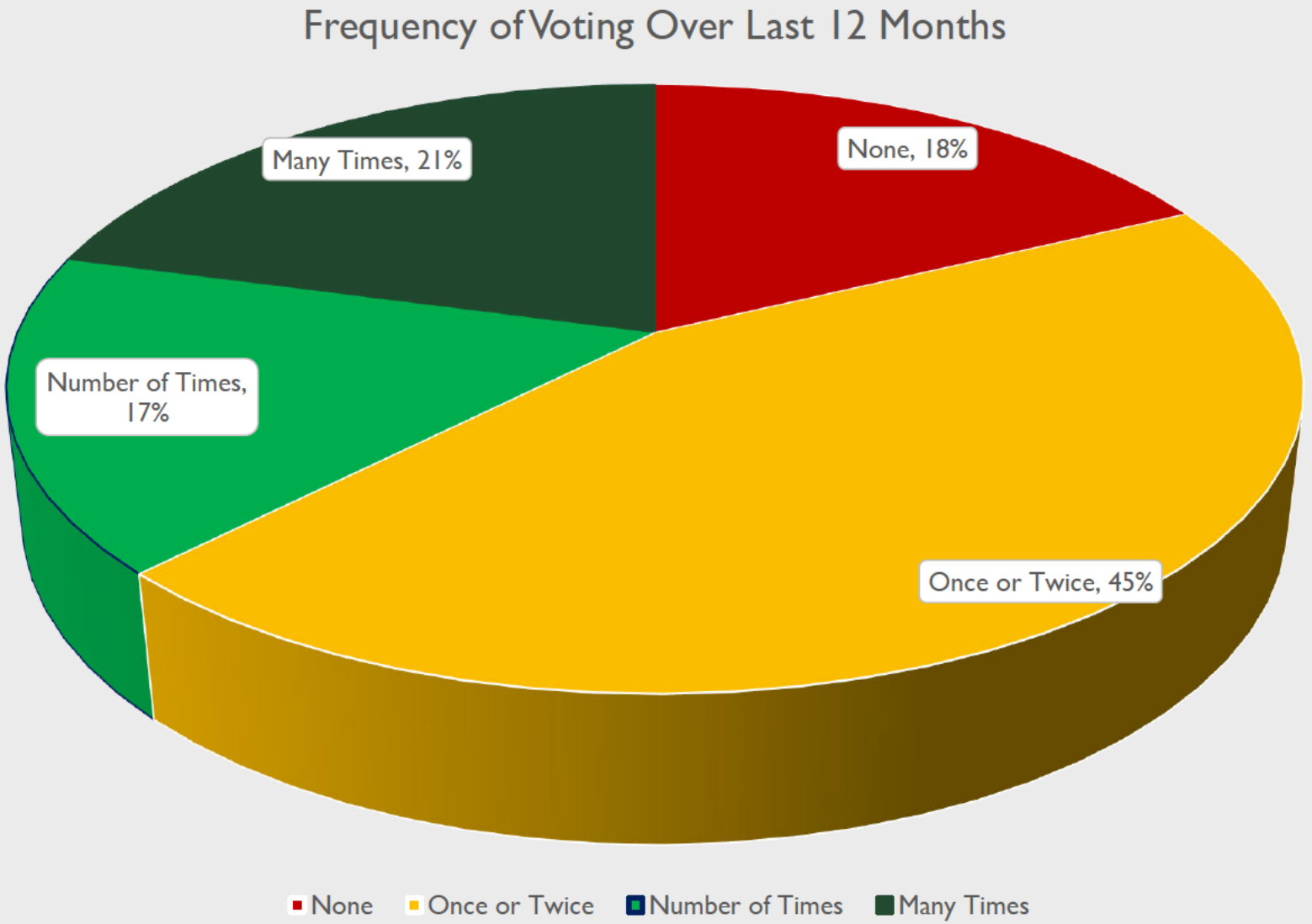
1004 completed responses – a 28.7% response rate

4.9% margin of error

Weighted for age, sex, and education



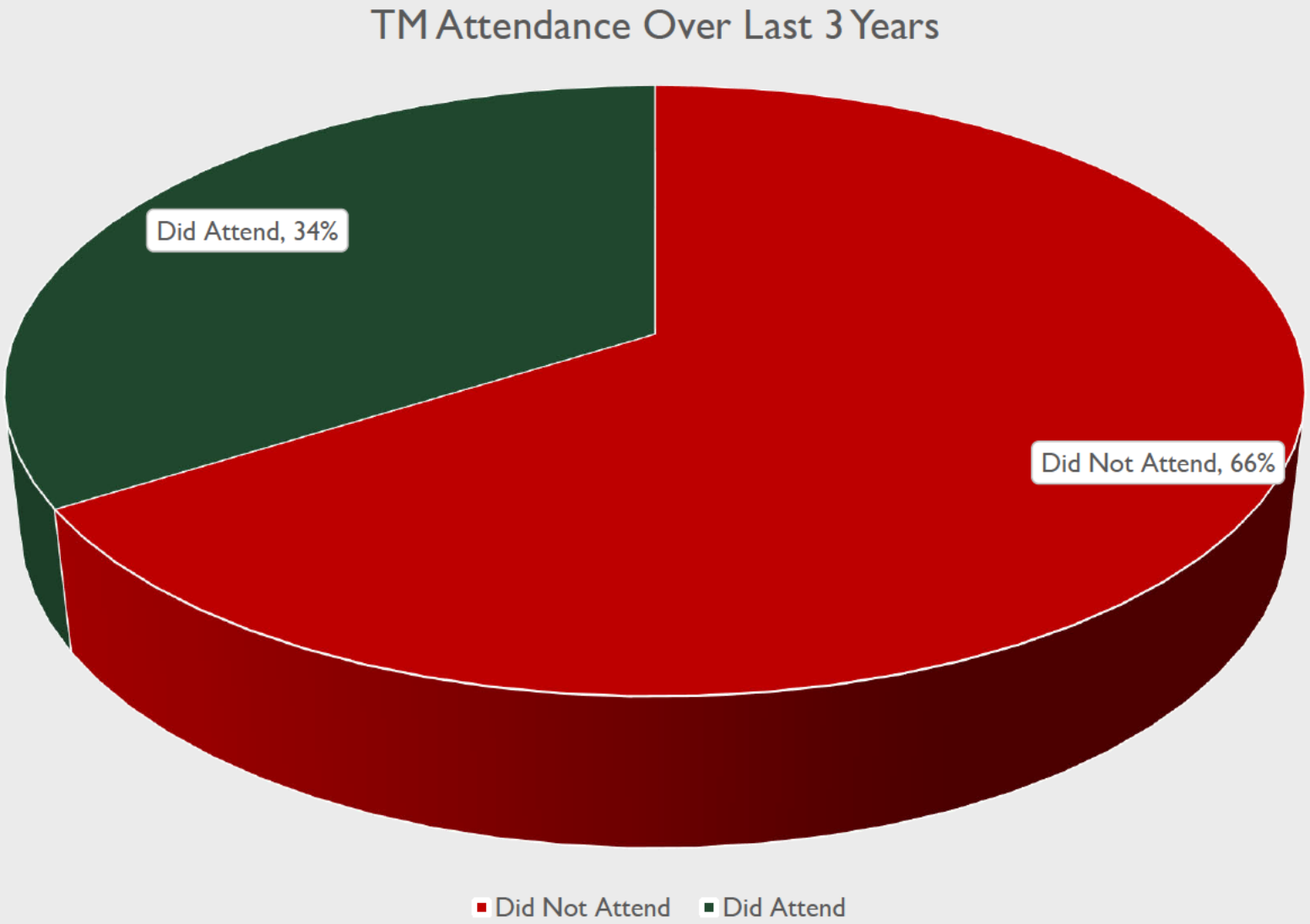
ELECTION PARTICIPATION



82% Voted in Last 12 Months

Older, Wealthier Residents More Likely to Vote

TOWN MEETING ATTENDANCE

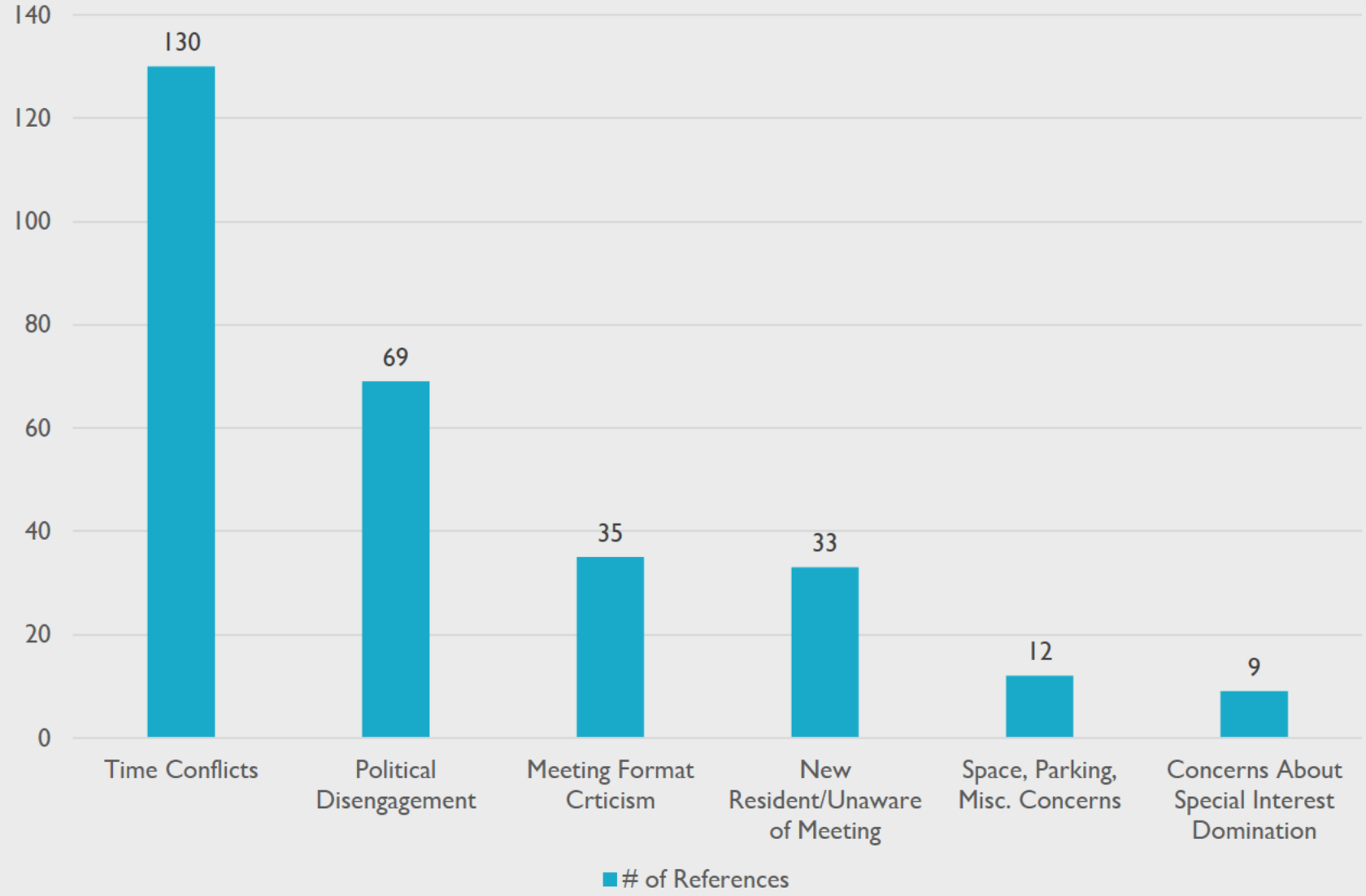


1/3 Attended TM in Last 3 years

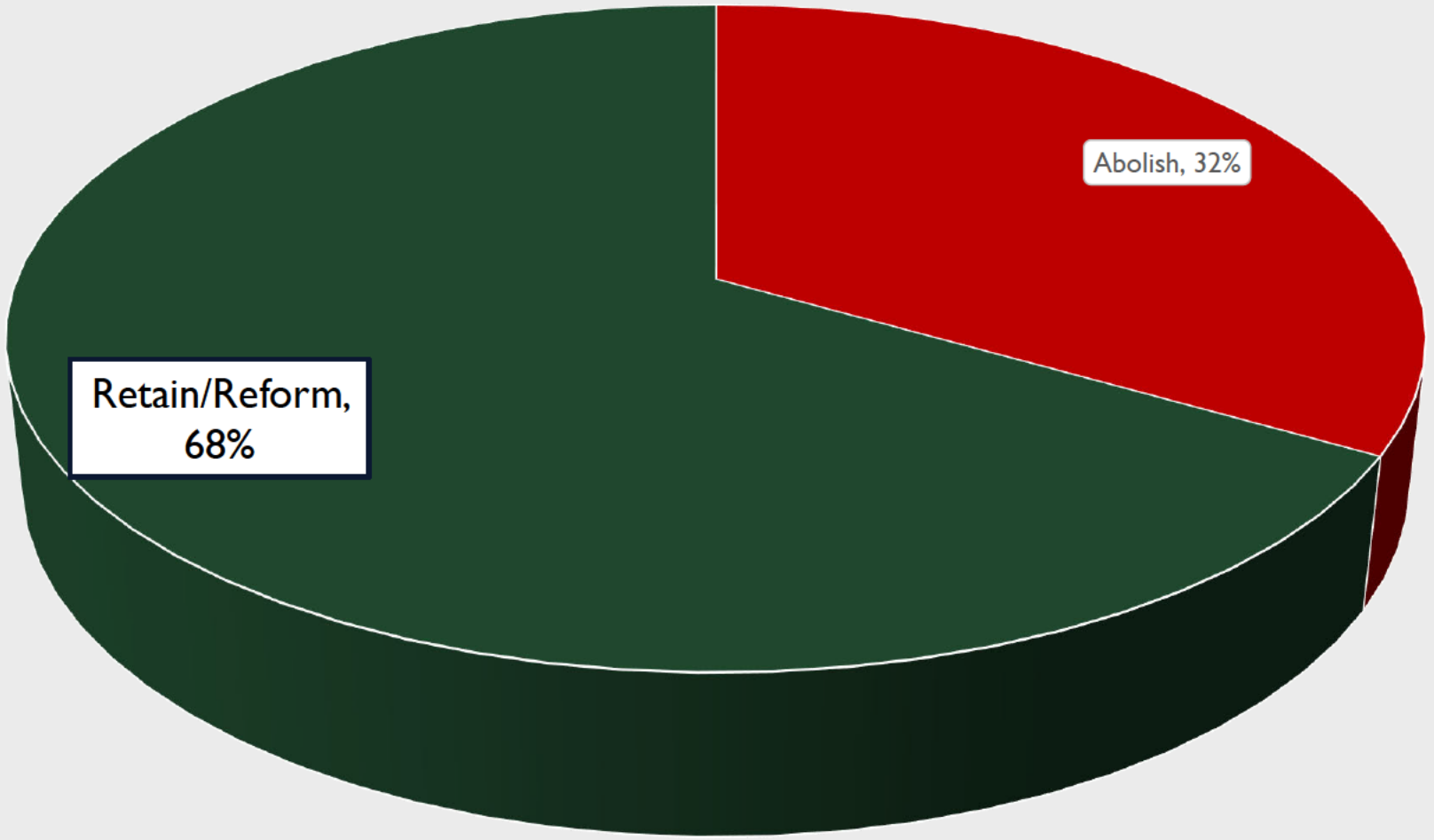
Older, Wealthier, & Parents More Likely to Attend

WHY RESIDENTS DON'T ATTEND TOWN MEETING

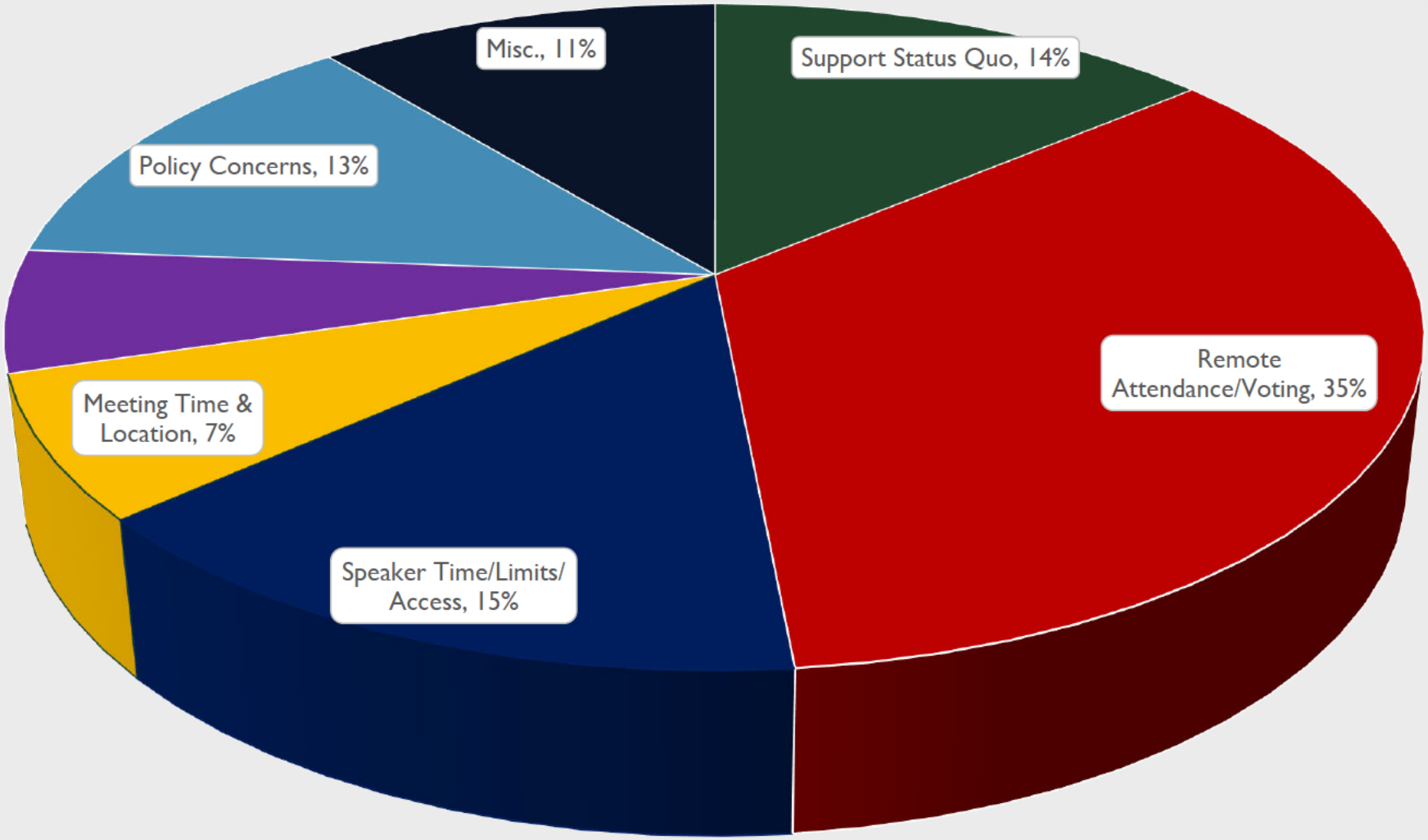
288 Responses



HOW TO IMPROVE OPEN TOWN MEETING?



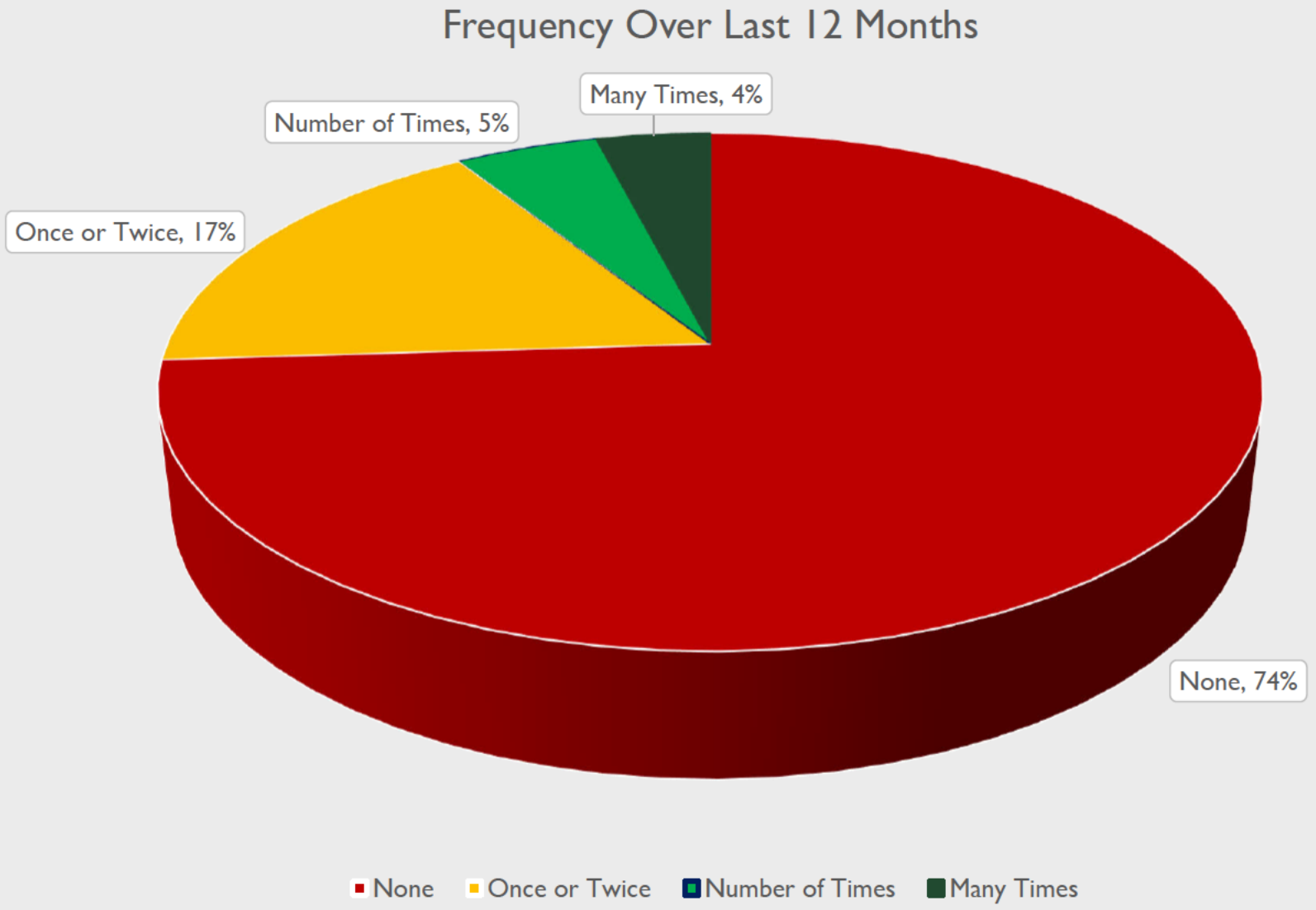
AMONG THOSE WISHING TO RETAIN OPEN TOWN MEETING . . .



Listening & Civility Concerns, 5%

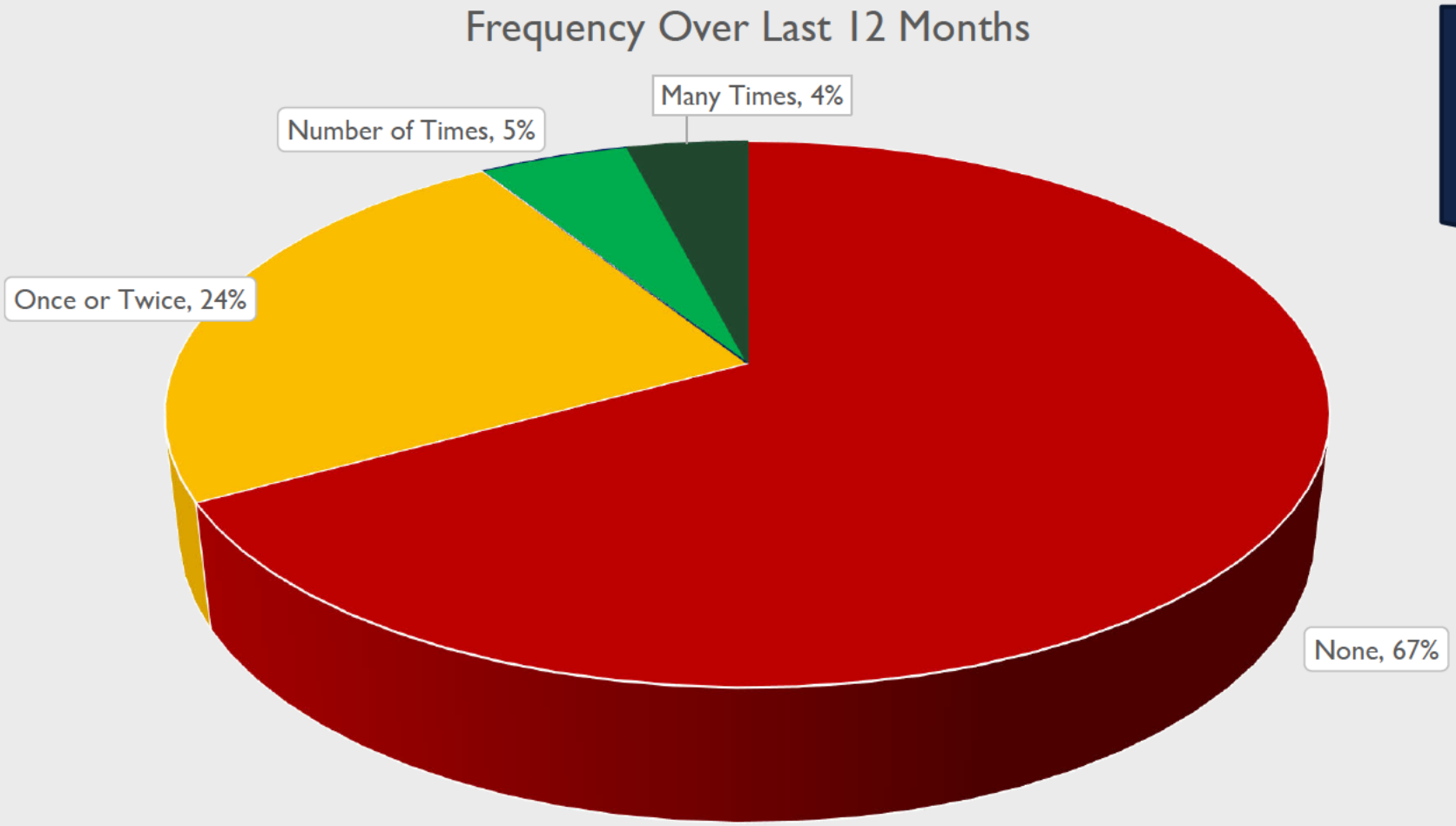
76% focused on remote voting, meeting time/location, civility, and speaker time/access

ATTENDED BOARD/COMMITTEE MEETING



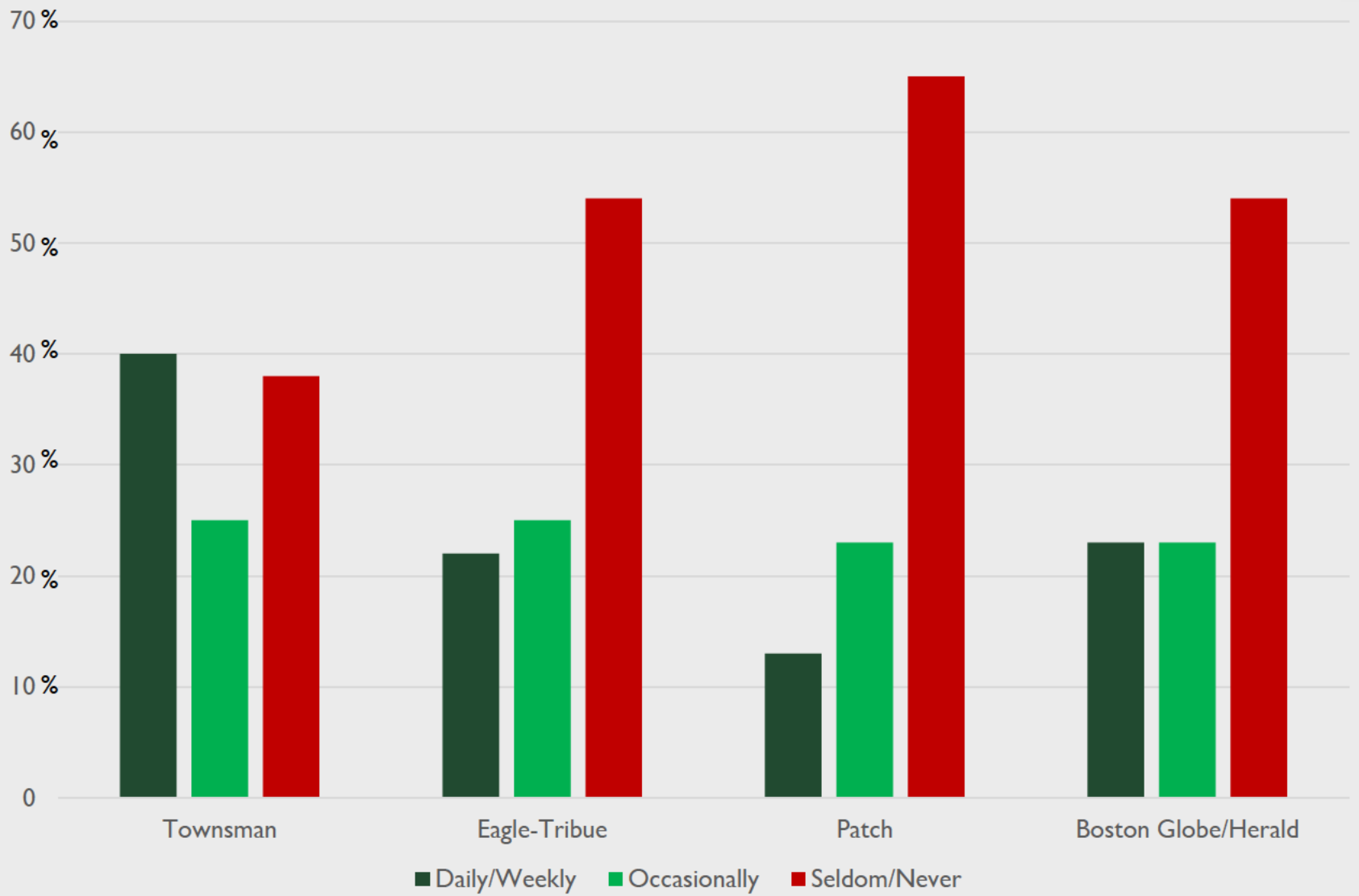
26% Attended Meeting in Last 12 Months

WATCHED BOARD/COMMITTEE MEETING ON TV

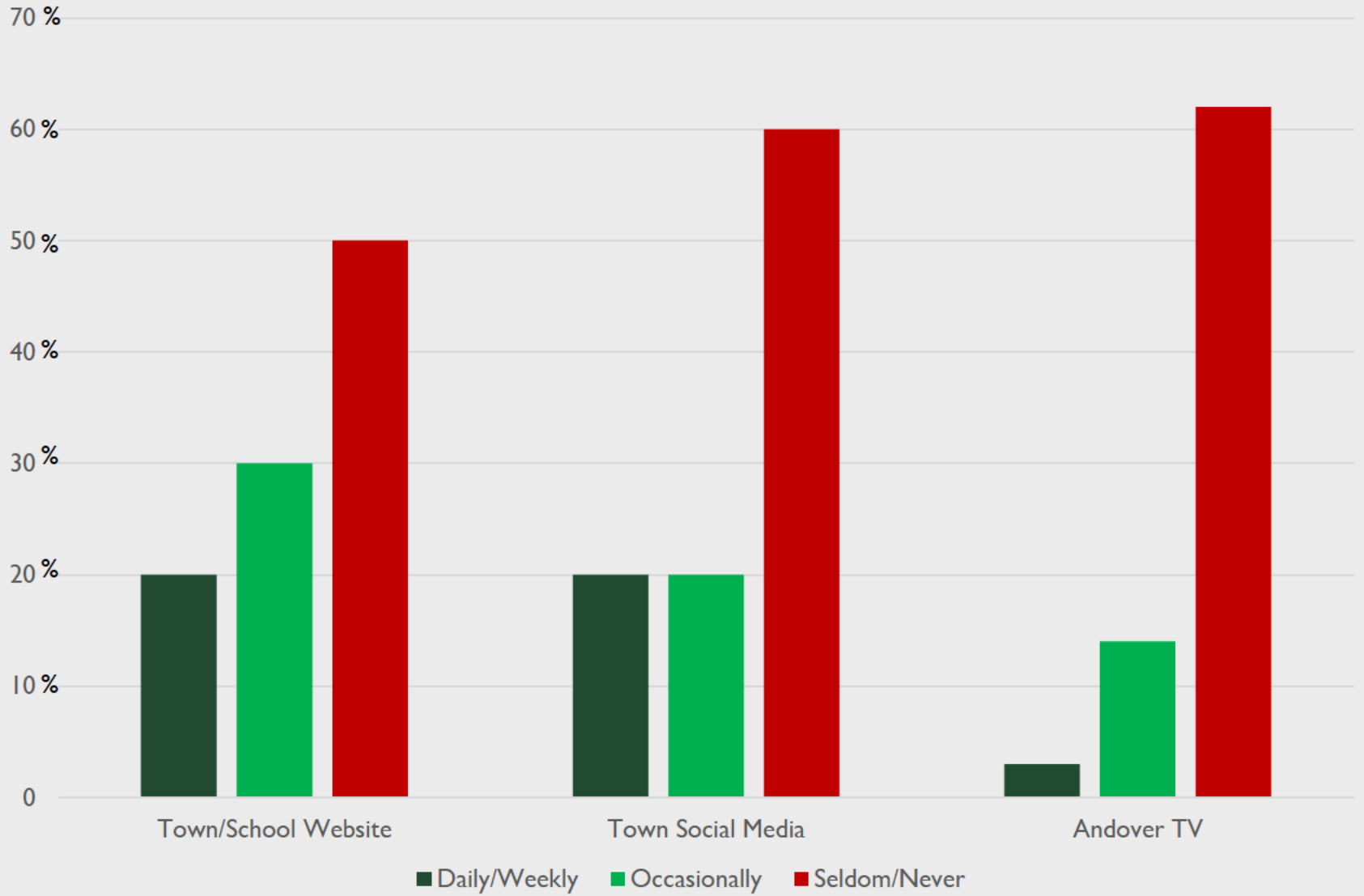


33% Watched Meeting in Last 12 Months

RESIDENTS' INFORMATION SOURCES

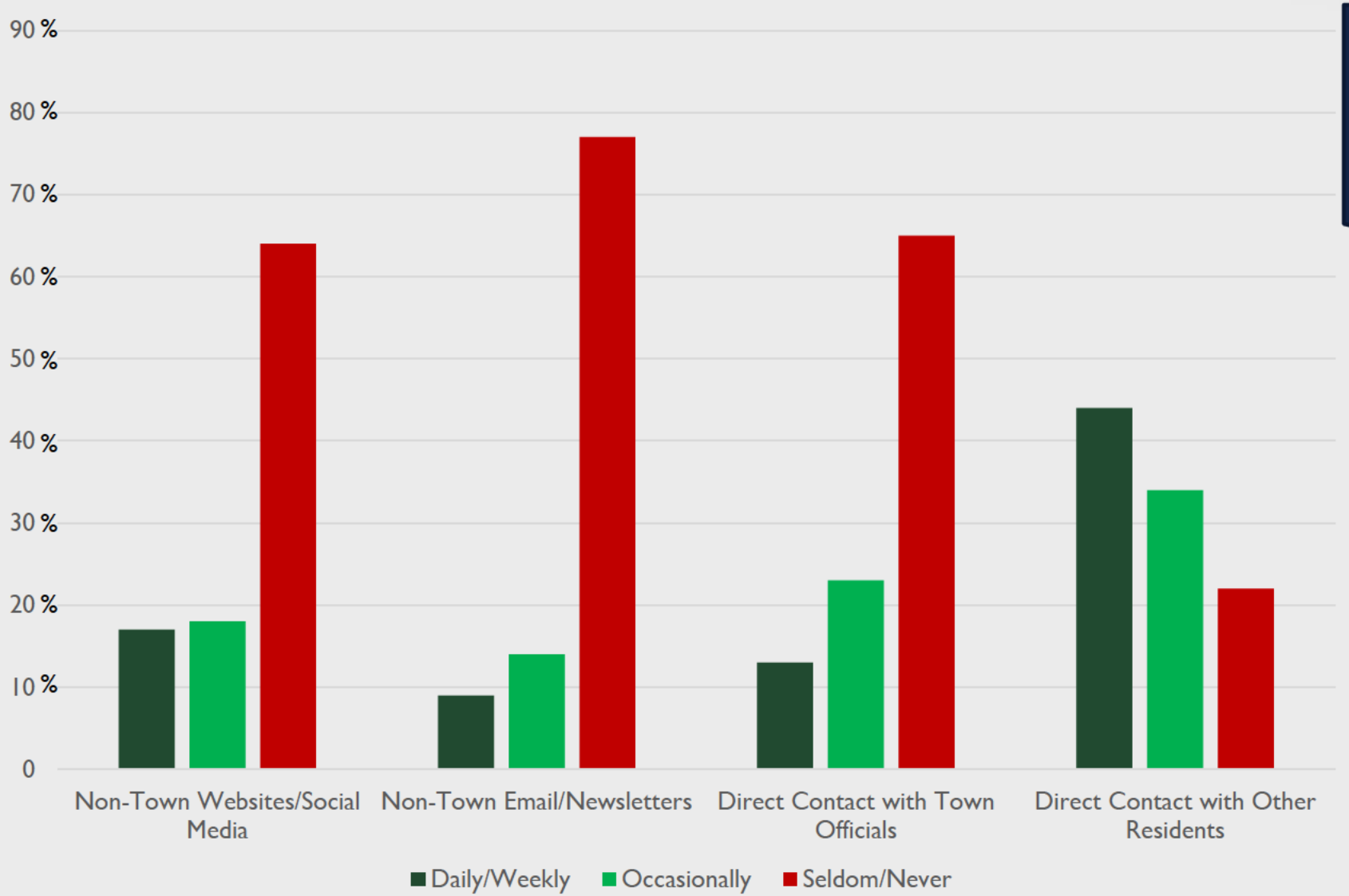


RESIDENTS' INFORMATION SOURCES



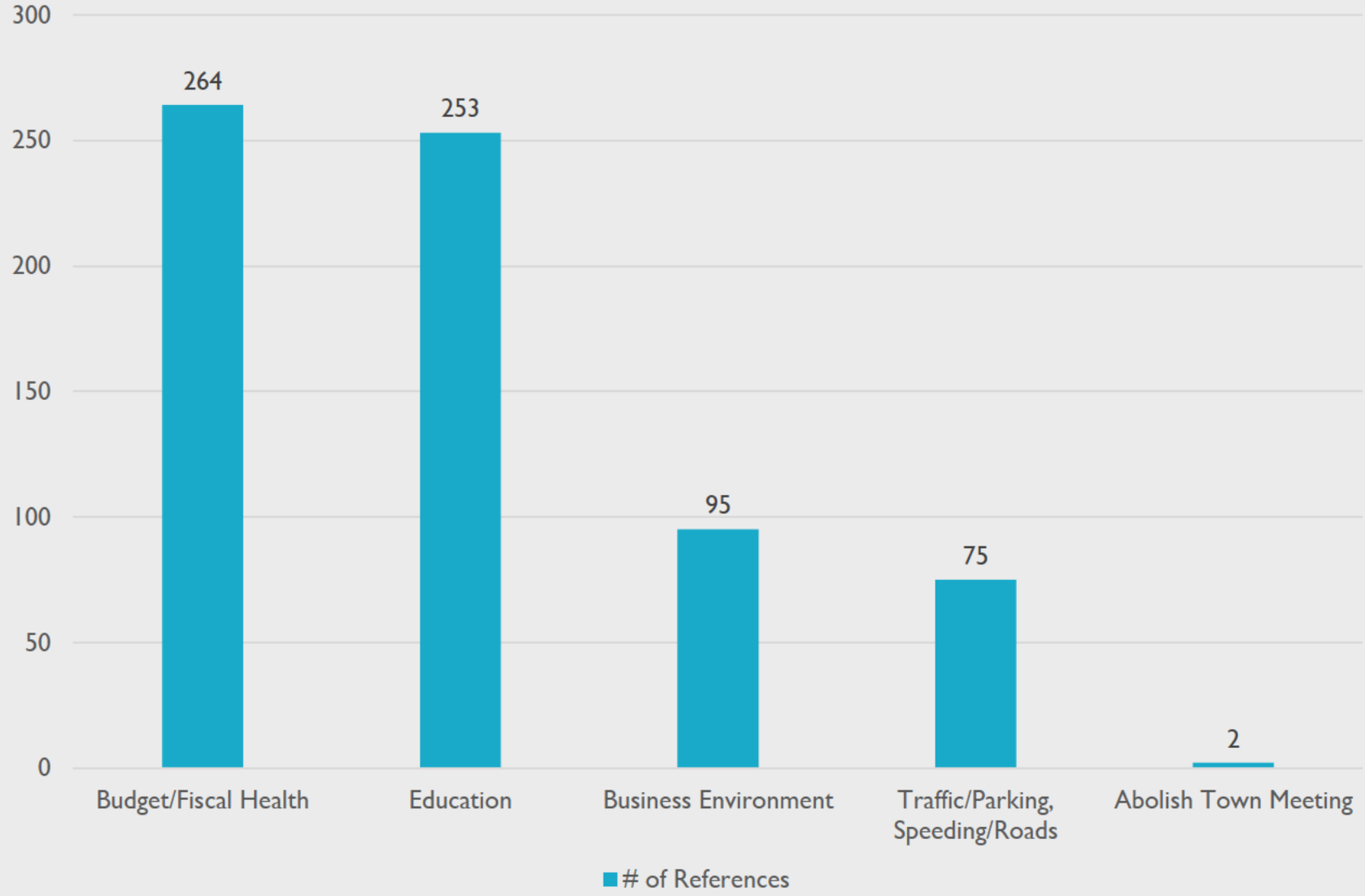
RESIDENTS' INFORMATION SOURCES

Townsman and Other Residents Most Popular Sources



BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING ANDOVER IN NEXT 5 YEARS?

619 Responses



Appendix 3 – Additional Information on Forms of Government

See following page.

FORMS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Statewide Totals

Municipalities with a city form of government: 59
Municipalities with a town form of government: 292
Mayors: 47 (of which 3 are part of a mayor-manager form of government)
Manager-council form of government: 12
Town administrators: 173
Town managers: 76
Town coordinators: 6
Executive secretaries: 4
Other (administrative coordinator, chief administrative officer, executive assistant, executive director, general manager, municipal assistant): 10

Open town meetings: 259
Representative town meetings: 33

Three-member boards of selectmen: 147
Five-member boards of selectmen: 144
Seven-member town council: 1*

NOTES: Some communities with a city form of government still refer to themselves as a town. The above list of municipal positions reflects only the number of each title statewide; the duties of a particular position will vary from community to community.

The name of each town's policy-making body (board of selectmen or select board) has either been provided by the town or taken from the description on the town's website. A number of communities are taking formal steps to change the name to "select board," while others have informally begun using the new name while making the transition.

* Wakefield renamed its board of selectmen as a town council in 2018, but the responsibilities were not changed.

Abbreviations

AC	Administrative Coordinator	TA	Town Administrator
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer	TC	Town Coordinator
ED	Executive Director	TM	Town Manager
ES	Executive Secretary	OTM	Open town meeting
ExA	Executive Assistant	RTM	Representative town meeting
GM	General Manager		
MuA	Municipal Assistant		

Communities with a city form of government are listed in all capital letters.

Letters in parentheses for certain cities indicate the use of one of the optional plans of city government ("model city charters") as authorized by Chapter 43 (Plan A, B, C, D, E or F). Cities that are not identified by a letter column are governed by provisions or special charters granted by the Legislature.

Some municipalities have adopted a home rule charter under the provisions of the Home Rule amendment and Chapter 43B. The first year in which the home rule charter was adopted is in parentheses.

Massachusetts law provides that no town with a population of less than 12,000 may adopt a city form of government, and no town with a population of less than 6,000 may have a representative town meeting.

In towns that do not have a chief municipal official, the chair of the Board of Selectmen fulfills that role.

Information in this chart was compiled from an annual MMA survey of each city and town in the state.

Community	Chief Municipal Official	Policy Board	Legislative Body
Abington (1974)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Acton (1969)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Acushnet (1971)	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Adams (1983)	TA	Selectmen (5)	RTM
AGAWAM (1972) (A)	Mayor		Council (11)
Alford		Select Board (3)	OTM
AMESBURY (1996) (F)	Mayor		Council (9)
AMHERST	TM		Council (13)
Andover	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Aquinnah	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Arlington	TM	Select Board (5)	RTM
Ashburnham	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Ashby	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Ashfield	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Ashland	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Athol	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
ATTLEBORO (1973)	Mayor		Council (11)
Auburn (1969)	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Avon	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Ayer	TM	Selectmen (3)	OTM
BARNSTABLE (1989)	TM		Council (13)
Barre	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Becket	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Bedford (1974)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Belchertown	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Bellingham	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Belmont (1926)	TA	Selectmen (3)	RTM
Berkley	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Berlin	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Bernardston	TC	Select Board (3)	OTM
BEVERLY (A)	Mayor		Council (9)
Billerica (1979)	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Blackstone (1974)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Blandford	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Bolton	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
BOSTON (A)	Mayor		Council (13)
Bourne	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Boxborough	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Boxford	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Boylston	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
BRAINTREE	Mayor		Council (9)
Brewster	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
BRIDGEWATER	TM		Council (9)
Brimfield		Selectmen (5)	OTM
BROCKTON	Mayor		Council (11)
Brookfield		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Brookline	TA	Select Board (5)	RTM
Buckland	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM

Community	Chief Municipal Official	Policy Board	Legislative Body
Burlington	TA	Selectmen (5)	RTM
CAMBRIDGE (1941) (E)	Mayor-Manager		Council (9)
Canton	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Carlisle	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Carver	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Charlemont		Select Board (3)	OTM
Charlton	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Chatham	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Chelmsford (1989)	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
CHELSEA	Manager		Council (11)
Cheshire	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Chester	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Chesterfield	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
CHICOPEE	Mayor		Council (13)
Chilmark	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Clarksburg	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Clinton	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Cohasset	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Colrain	TC	Select Board (3)	OTM
Concord (1957)	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Conway	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Cummington		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Dalton	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Danvers	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Dartmouth	TA	Select Board (5)	RTM
Dedham (1974)	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Deerfield	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Dennis	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Dighton	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Douglas	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Dover	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Dracut (1985)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Dudley	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Dunstable	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Duxbury	TM	Selectmen (3)	OTM
East Bridgewater	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
East Brookfield		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Eastham	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
EASTHAMPTON (1996)	Mayor		Council (9)
EAST LONGMEADOW	TM		Council (7)
Easton (1972)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Edgartown	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Egremont		Select Board (3)	OTM
Erving	AC	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Essex	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
EVERETT	Mayor		Council (11)
Fairhaven	TA	Selectmen (3)	RTM
FALL RIVER (A)	Mayor		Council (9)
Falmouth	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
FITCHBURG (B)	Mayor		Council (11)
Florida	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Foxborough	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
FRAMINGHAM	Mayor		Council (11)
FRANKLIN (1978)	TA		Council (9)
Freetown	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
GARDNER (B)	Mayor		Council (11)
Georgetown	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Gill	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
GLOUCESTER (1975)	Mayor		Council (9)
Goshen		Select Board (3)	OTM
Gosnold		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Grafton (1987)	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Granby	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Granville	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Great Barrington	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
GREENFIELD (2003)	Mayor		Council (13)
Groton	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Groveland		Selectmen (5)	OTM
Hadley	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Halifax	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Hamilton	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Hampden	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Hancock		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Hanover	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Hanson	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Hardwick	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Harvard	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Harwich	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Hatfield	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
HAVERHILL (A)	Mayor		Council (9)
Hawley		Select Board (3)	OTM
Heath	TC	Select Board (3)	OTM
Hingham	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Hinsdale	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Holbrook	TA	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Holden	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Holland	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Holliston	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
HOLYOKE (A)	Mayor		Council (15)
Hopedale	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Hopkinton	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Hubbardston	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Hudson (1971)	ExA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Hull	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Huntington		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Ipswich	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Kingston	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Lakeville	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Lancaster	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Lanesborough	TM	Selectmen (3)	OTM
LAWRENCE (1983)	Mayor		Council (9)
Lee	CAO	Selectmen (3)	RTM

Community	Chief Municipal Official	Policy Board	Legislative Body
Leicester	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Lenox	CAO	Selectmen (5)	OTM
LEOMINSTER (1969) (A)	Mayor		Council (9)
Leverett	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Lexington	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Leyden	MuA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Lincoln	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Littleton	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Longmeadow (2004)	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
LOWELL (E)	Mayor-Manager		Council (9)
Ludlow	TA	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Lunenburg	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
LYNN (A)	Mayor		Council (11)
Lynnfield (1971)	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
MALDEN (A)	Mayor		Council (11)
Manchester-by-the-Sea	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Mansfield (1920)	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Marblehead	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Marion	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
MARLBOROUGH (B)	Mayor		Council (11)
Marshfield (1976)	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Mashpee	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Mattapoisett	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Maynard	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Medfield (1972)	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
MEDFORD (A)	Mayor		Council (7)
Medway	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
MELROSE (B)	Mayor		Aldermen (11)
Mendon	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Merrimac		Selectmen (3)	OTM
METHUEN (1972)	Mayor		Council (9)
Middleborough	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Middlefield	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Middleton (1974)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Milford	TA	Selectmen (3)	RTM
Millbury	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Millis (1977)	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Millville	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Milton (1927)	TA	Select Board (5)	RTM
Monroe		Select Board (3)	OTM
Monson	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Montague	TA	Selectmen (3)	RTM
Monterey		Select Board (3)	OTM
Montgomery		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Mount Washington		Select Board (3)	OTM
Nahant (1980)	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Nantucket	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Natick (1980)	TA	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Needham	TM	Select Board (5)	RTM
New Ashford		Select Board (3)	OTM
NEW BEDFORD (B)	Mayor		Council (11)
New Braintree	ES	Select Board (3)	OTM
Newbury	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
NEWBURYPORT (1919) (B)	Mayor		Council (11)
New Marlborough	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
New Salem	TC	Select Board (3)	OTM
NEWTON (1972) (A)	Mayor		Council (24)
Norfolk	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
NORTH ADAMS (A)	Mayor		Council (9)
NORTHAMPTON (B)	Mayor		Council (9)
North Andover (1986)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
NORTH ATTLEBOROUGH	TM		Council (9)
Northborough (1970)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Northbridge	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
North Brookfield		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Northfield	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
North Reading (1970)	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Norton (1989)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Norwell (1973)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Norwood	GM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Oak Bluffs	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Oakham		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Orange	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Orleans (1987)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Otis	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Oxford (1972)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
PALMER (2004)	TM		Council (7)
Paxton	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
PEABODY (D)	Mayor		Council (11)
Pelham		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Pembroke	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Pepperell	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Peru	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Petersham	AC	Select Board (3)	OTM
Phillipston	CAO	Select Board (3)	OTM
PITTSFIELD (B)	Mayor		Council (11)
Plainfield	AC	Select Board (3)	OTM
Plainville	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Plymouth (1973)	TM	Select Board (5)	RTM
Plympton	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Princeton	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Provincetown (1990)	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
QUINCY (A)	Mayor		Council (9)
RANDOLPH	TM		Council (9)
Raynham	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Reading (1986)	TM	Select Board (5)	RTM
Rehoboth	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
REVERE (B)	Mayor		Council (11)
Richmond	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Rochester	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Rockland (1970)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Rockport	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM

Community	Chief Municipal Official	Policy Board	Legislative Body
Rowe	ES	Select Board (3)	OTM
Rowley	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Royalston		Select Board (3)	OTM
Russell		Select Board (3)	OTM
Rutland	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
SALEM (B)	Mayor		Council (11)
Salisbury (1988)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Sandisfield	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Sandwich	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Saugus (1947)	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Savoy		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Scituate (1972)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Seekonk (1976)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Sharon	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Sheffield	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Shelburne	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Sherborn	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Shirley	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Shrewsbury	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Shutesbury	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Somerset	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
SOMERVILLE (A)	Mayor		Council (11)
Southampton	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Southborough	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
SOUTHBRIDGE (1974)	TM		Council (9)
South Hadley	TA	Select Board (5)	RTM
Southwick	CAO	Select Board (3)	OTM
Spencer	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
SPRINGFIELD (A)	Mayor		Council (13)
Sterling	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Stockbridge (1937)	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Stoneham	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Stoughton (1972)	TM	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Stow	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Sturbridge (1973)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Sudbury (1994)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Sunderland	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Sutton (1988)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Swampscott (1969)	TA	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Swansea	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
TAUNTON	Mayor		Council (9)
Templeton	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Tewksbury	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Tisbury	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Tolland		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Topsfield	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Townsend	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Truro	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Tyngsborough	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Tyringham	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Upton	TM	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Uxbridge	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Wakefield	TM	Council (7)*	OTM
Wales	ES	Select Board (3)	OTM
Walpole (1973)	TA	Selectmen (5)	RTM
WALTHAM (B)	Mayor		Council (15)
Ware	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Wareham (1977)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Warren		Selectmen (3)	OTM
Warwick	TC	Select Board (3)	OTM
Washington		Select Board (3)	OTM
WATERTOWN (1980)	TM		Council (9)
Wayland	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Webster (1987)	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Wellesley	ED	Selectmen (5)	RTM
Wellfleet (1986)	TA	Select Board (5)	OTM
Wendell	TC	Select Board (3)	OTM
Wenham	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Westborough (1974)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
West Boylston	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
West Bridgewater	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
West Brookfield	ES	Selectmen (3)	OTM
WESTFIELD (B)	Mayor		Council (13)
Westford	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Westhampton		Select Board (3)	OTM
Westminster	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
West Newbury	TM	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Weston	TM	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Westport	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
WEST SPRINGFIELD (2000) (A)	Mayor		Council (9)
West Stockbridge	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
West Tisbury	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Westwood (1970)	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
WEYMOUTH (1999)	Mayor		Council (11)
Whately	TA	Select Board (3)	OTM
Whitman	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Wilbraham	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Williamsburg	TA	Selectmen (3)	OTM
Williamstown	TM	Select Board (5)	OTM
Wilmington (1950)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Winchendon (1981)	TM	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Winchester (1975)	TM	Select Board (5)	RTM
Windsor		Select Board (3)	OTM
WINTHROP (2005)	TM		Council (9)
WOBURN	Mayor		Council (9)
WORCESTER	Mayor-Manager		Council (11)
Worthington		Select Board (3)	OTM
Wrentham	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM
Yarmouth	TA	Selectmen (5)	OTM

Massachusetts Forms of Government

Presentation to Town Government Study Committee

July 22, 2019



COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

Presentation Overview

- Forms of Government in Massachusetts
  - Historical Perspective
  - Four Current Forms
- Review of Trends and Current Status
- Discussion

Historical Perspective

- Plymouth
  - Town Meeting
  - Moderator
  - Town Clerk
  - Board of Selectmen and executive authority
- Boston-the first City (1822)-Special Act
- Expansion of Municipal Government and the Long Ballot
  - Planning Function early 1900's
- Brookline-the first Representative Town Meeting (1915)
- Model City Charters (1915-)
- Norwood-the first professional management (1915)
  - Special Act Charters
- Home Rule Act
  - Local Control of Structure and Processes

The Four Basic Forms

- Open Town Meeting with Board of Selectmen and some Professional Management
- Representative Town Meeting with Board of Selectmen and some Professional Management
- Elected Council with Professional Management
- Elected Council with Elected Mayor

Open Town Meeting

- Uniquely New England
- "Perfect exercise of self-government" Jefferson
- Praised for its "sense of community" and tradition
- Role of Finance Committee
- Questions about its effectiveness in current-day
- Considerations
  - Complexities of government
  - Changing methods of citizen participation
  - Long debates often on the more minor issues
  - Limited to 1-3 times per year (Division of Annual Meeting)
  - Packing for Issues
  - Limited participation as a % of voters
    - New Hampshire S2

Representative Town Meeting

- Elected representatives by precinct
  - Achieves geographical representation
- Informed and responsible
  - Carry-over of information and of decision results
- Finance Committee
- Considerations
  - Effect on tradition
  - Lessened impact of interest groups
  - Appropriate size
  - General Attendance is higher
  - Competition for seats
    - Pool of Candidates
  - Impact on Citizen participation
  - Standing committees
  - Deliberative Body not Representative Assembly?

Council-Manager

- Most common form of government in US
- Retains Professional Executive
- Establishes clear line of executive and legislative functions
- Enforces unity of direction
- More timely action on issues
- Considerations/Variations
  - Citizen awareness of representative(s)
  - Council size
  - District and/or at large seats
  - Election of Council President
  - Any role for Select Board?
  - Any role for Town Meeting?

Council-Mayor

- Becoming a city
- 2nd most common form of government in US
- Creates Political Executive
- Establishes clear line of executive and legislative functions
- Risks unity of direction
- More timely action on issues
- Considerations/Variations
  - Citizen awareness of representative(s)
  - District and/or at large seats

COMMUNITY
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TOWN OF ANDOVER

Overview of Massachusetts Municipal Government

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Massachusetts Municipalities

All land in Massachusetts is incorporated into 351 cities and towns. Until 1938, there were 355 cities and towns. Municipalities in Massachusetts do not have independent authority and derive their power and authority from the Legislature. A municipality must conform to the current provisions of general law or seek legislation giving approval to any change.

The first city in Massachusetts was Boston which incorporated in 1822 upon a change to the Massachusetts Constitution in 1821. This allowed for the first time a form of government outside of Town Meeting. The latest city to organize was North Attleborough in 2018. The Legislature created legislation for six types of cities, plans A to F. Home-rule petitions are allowed which can create variations of these forms. There are currently 59 cities in Massachusetts.

Towns have changed greatly since the Town of Norwood was the first to hire a professional manager in 1915. To this day, their CEO is referred to as the General Manager. Several communities created professional managers over the next 50 years. Beginning in the 1970's, municipal government in Massachusetts began to change at a rapid pace to the point that 254 of the 292 towns have a professional manager to some extent.

Even though Massachusetts government has change greatly in the last 50 years, it is quite different from the trends in the rest of the Country, particularly outside of New England. Nearly 49% of municipalities in the US are governed by the Council-Manager format and 44% by the Mayor-Council format. Town Meeting is relegated to the New England area. There are currently 292 towns in Massachusetts.

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Massachusetts Cities - 59

12	Council-Manager	Year Adopted	Pop.	CEO Title	Town Council #	Income
	Amherst	2018	37,819	Town Manager	13	17,524
	Barnstable	1989	45,193	Town Manager	13	36,477
	Bridgewater	2011	26,563	Town Manager	9	29,107
	Chelsea	1994	35,177	City Manager	11	16,561
	East Longmeadow	2016	15,720	Town Manager	7	39,110
	Franklin	1978	31,634	Town Administrator	9	46,631
	North Attleborough	2019	28,712	Town Manager	9	38,742
	Palmer	2004	12,140	Town Manager	7	24,470
	Randolph	2009	32,112	Town Manager	9	25,741
	Southbridge	1974	16,719	Town Manager	9	18,883
	Watertown	1980	31,915	Town Manager	9	42,032
	Winthrop	2005	17,497	Town Manager	9	31,120

3	Council-Manager-Mayor	Adopted	Pop.	CEO Title	City Council #	Income
	Cambridge	1942	105,162	City Manager	9	58,985
	Lowell	1944	106,519	City Manager	9	19,777
	Worcester	1950	181,045	City Manager	11	20,416

44	Council-Mayor	*Newest Cities*		City Council #	Income
	Framingham	2017	70,856	13	36,874
	Braintree	2008	37,414	9	38,359
	Greenfield	2003	17,521	13	21,306
	West Springfield	2000	28,624	13	26,492
	Weymouth	1999	55,747	11	32,005
	Amesbury	1996	17,294	9	32,874
	Easthampton	1996	16,054	9	27,326
	Methuen	1994	49,205	9	28,556
	Agawam	1989	28,728	11	27,854

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Massachusetts Towns – 292
Communities with Open Town Meeting
Population of 20,000 or more

	Pop.	Income	CEO Title	BoS #	#Voters ATElection	% of Pop	#Voters ATM
Andover	33,201	76,456	Town Manager	5	4,186	12.61%	536
Dracut	29,457	31,392	Town Manager	5	2,244	7.62%	Quorum
Tewksbury	28,961	37,185	Town Manager	5	1,801	6.22%	145
North Andover	28,352	54,095	Town Manager	5	1,534	5.41%	387
Marshfield	25,132	47,361	Town Administrator	3	1,379	5.49%	Quorum
Wakefield	24,932	42,076	Town Administrator	7	3,265	13.10%	255
Yarmouth	23,793	29,303	Town Administrator	5	2,618	11.00%	Quorum
Mansfield	23,184	46,182	Town Manager	5	953	4.11%	278
Middleborough	23,116	27,051	Town Manager	5	1,756	7.60%	Quorum
Easton	23,112	46,683	Town Administrator	5	987	4.27%	Quorum
Wilmington	22,325	40,654	Town Manager	5	3,339	14.96%	364
Hingham	22,157	103,297	Town Administrator	3	2,850	12.86%	Quorum
Westford	21,951	57,815	Town Manager	5	937	4.27%	540
Acton	21,924	61,849	Town Manager	5	1,974	9.00%	397
Wareham	21,822	22,500	Town Administrator	5	1,478	6.77%	Quorum
Canton	21,561	55,479	Town Administrator	5	3,060	14.19%	305
Stoneham	21,437	40,230	Town Administrator	5	2,194	10.23%	444
Sandwich	20,675	36,590	Town Manager	5	2,100	10.16%	566

COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

Massachusetts Towns – 292
Communities with Representative Town Meeting

33 Representative Town Meeting

Est. 1934 - 6k or more pop.

	Pop.	Income	CEO Title	BoS #
Brookline	58,732	78,549	Town Administrator	5
Plymouth	56,468	33,573	Town Manager	5
Arlington	42,844	54,612	Town Manager	5
Billerica	40,243	34,294	Town Manager	5
Shrewsbury	35,608	51,488	Town Manager	5
Dartmouth	34,032	31,728	Town Administrator	5
Chelmsford	33,802	41,541	Town Manager	5
Natick	33,006	54,316	Town Manager	5
Falmouth	31,531	36,337	Town Manager	5
Lexington	31,394	105,007	Town Manager	5
Needham	28,886	103,782	Town Manager	5
Norwood	28,602	40,730	General Manager	5
Milford	27,999	31,958	Town Administrator	3
Wellesley	27,892	193,176	Executive Director	5
Milton	27,003	61,421	Town Administrator	3
Stoughton	26,962	30,795	Town Manager	5
Saugus	26,628	31,072	Town Manager	5
Danvers	26,493	38,921	Town Manager	5
Reading	24,747	52,074	Town Manager	5
Belmont	24,729	85,813	Town Administrator	3
Dedham	24,729	50,584	Town Manager	5
Burlington	24,498	43,514	Town Administrator	5
Walpole	24,070	50,355	Town Administrator	5
Winchester	21,374	100,074	Town Manager	5
Ludlow	21,103	25,853	Town Administrator	5
South Hadley	17,514	29,500	Town Administrator	5
Auburn	16,188	31,846	Town Manager	5
Fairhaven	15,873	27,835	Town Administrator	3
Swampscott	13,787	69,261	Town Administrator	5
Holbrook	10,791	28,238	Town Administrator	5
Adams	8,485	21,675	Town Administrator	5
Montague	8,437	21,902	Town Administrator	3
Lee	5,943	26,385	Town Administrator	3

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Massachusetts Towns – 292

CEO/CAO

Adminsitrative Coordinator	1
Chief Administrative Officer	3
City Manager	3
Executive Assistant	1
Executive Director	1
Executive Secretary	1
General Manager	1
Town Administrator	166
Town Coordinator	3
Town Manager	74
	254

Board of Selectmen Composition

7	1
5	141
3	150
	292

Massachusetts Forms of Government

Presentation to Town Government Study Committee

October 27, 2020



Presentation Overview

- Recap Forms of Government in Massachusetts
  - Four Current Forms
- Recap Forms of Government in US
- Review Reasons for Changing Government
- Town Meeting to Council
- Discussion

The Four Basic Forms

- Open Town Meeting with Board of Selectmen and some Professional Management
- Representative Town Meeting with Board of Selectmen and some Professional Management
- Elected Council with Professional Management
- Elected Council with Elected Mayor

Data Regarding Forms of Government

- United States
  - 49% Council-Manager
  - 44% Council-Mayor
- Massachusetts
  - 292 Towns
    - 254 w/ Professional Manager
    - 33 RTM
    - 259 OTM - 18 OTM with population > 20K -
  - 59 Cities
    - 15 Council - Manager
    - 44 Council- Mayor

Why a Change of Government is Considered

- Operations
  - Sense that people are not getting bang for the dollar
  - Lack of responsiveness or accountability
  - Greater oversight needed
  - Lack of strategic plan
  - Lack of communications
- Political Infighting or Lack of Interest
  - Infighting inhibits decision-making process
  - Not enough citizens interested to make it work
  - Parochial issues divide community
- Legal Suits
  - Suits amongst internal groups lead to anarchy

Why a Change of Government is Considered

- Rapid Growth
  - Managing services
  - Has become too complex
- Stagnation
  - Need for tax revenue
- Town Meeting Ineffectiveness
  - Attendance issues
  - Representation
  - Stacking on certain vote
- Other
  - Retirement of key personnel
  - An inability to attract candidates to serve in either elected or appointed office

Why a Change of Government is Considered

MAJOR POINT

Most changes occur when there is a groundswell pushing for change.

Massachusetts' Councils

12	Town Council	Adopted	Pop.	CEO Title	#	Income
	Amherst	2018	37,819	Town Manager	13	17,524
	Barnstable	1989	45,193	Town Manager	13	36,477
	Bridgewater	2011	26,563	Town Manager	9	29,107
	Chelsea	1994	35,177	City Manager	11	16,561
	East Longmeadow	2016	15,720	Town Manager	7	39,110
	Franklin	1978	31,634	Town Administrator	9	46,631
	North Attleborough	2019	28,712	Town Manager	9	38,742
	Palmer	2004	12,140	Town Manager	7	24,470
	Randolph	2009	32,112	Town Manager	9	25,741
	Southbridge	1974	16,719	Town Manager	9	18,883
	Watertown	1980	31,915	Town Manager	9	42,032
	Winthrop	2005	17,497	Town Manager	9	31,120
3	City Council	Adopted	Pop.	CEO Title	#	Income
	Cambridge	1942	105,162	City Manager	9	58,985
	Lowell	1944	106,519	City Manager	9	19,777
	Worcester	1950	181,045	City Manager	11	20,416

Town Meeting to Council Legislative Differences

- Budget adopted through Council controlled process
  - Manager proposes and presents to Council
  - Council reviews and adopts budget
    A. Full Council reviews as an entire body
    B. Council sub-committee reviews and recommends to full Council
    C. A citizens' advisory committee could be adopted to recommend to full Council
- Zoning is approved by the Council
  - A separate ZBA and Planning Board continues but recommend zoning changes to the Council
- The Council combines the authority of the Select Board and Town Meeting in setting policy.
  - The Charter or the Council could still call for citizen advisory committees to provide recommendations or oversight

Appendix 4 – Relationship of Various Municipal Quantitative Metrics to Form of Government

Introduction

Massachusetts comprises 351 municipalities. Of these, 292 are towns. 259 of the towns utilize Open Town Meeting and 33 have Representative Town Meeting. The remaining 59 municipalities have a city form of government; council-manager in 15 and council-mayor in 44. The Committee compared the form of government of all 351 municipalities with their population, median household income, proportion of residents speaking a language other than English at home, physical area and age distribution. The quantitative data were taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2013 Three-Year Estimate. This was the latest data set available at the time that included all parameters of interest. The form of government for each municipality was taken from the Massachusetts Municipal Directory for 2013, even though more recent editions of the Massachusetts Municipal Directories were available, so that both sources of data would be consistent.

These metrics provide a one-dimensional view of a municipality, and were studied purely to establish contextual background. They might suggest that a particular form of government can work well in a given community of a specific size or other characteristic, but not that a particular form of government would definitively work best in such a community. It would be very simplistic for the Committee's recommendations to be driven by this analysis.

Results

1. Relationship between population and form of government

Massachusetts law requires that any municipality with a population of 12,000 or less must be governed by town meeting. Those up to 6,000 must have an open town meeting. Those between 6,000 and 12,000 may have either an open or representative town meeting, although 71 of the 74 have open town meetings. The Town of Lee (population 5788 in 2013) adopted Representative Town Meeting at a time when its population exceeded 6,000 and was not required to change when its population declined below the 6,000 threshold.

Open Town Meeting is dominant in municipalities below 24,000 inhabitants. 84% of municipalities below 24,000 use Open Town Meeting, and 70% of the total population of all municipalities in this range live in towns with Open Town Meeting.

As populations increase above 12,000 people, the proportion of municipalities that use open town meeting starts to trend downwards as both representative town meeting and city forms become more common. The mean population of towns with Representative Town Meeting is 25,708, the median is 24,975, and Representative Town Meeting is most prevalent in the range of 24,000 to 30,000, in which 13 towns use it. Above this range, the use of Representative Town Meeting trends downward quickly.

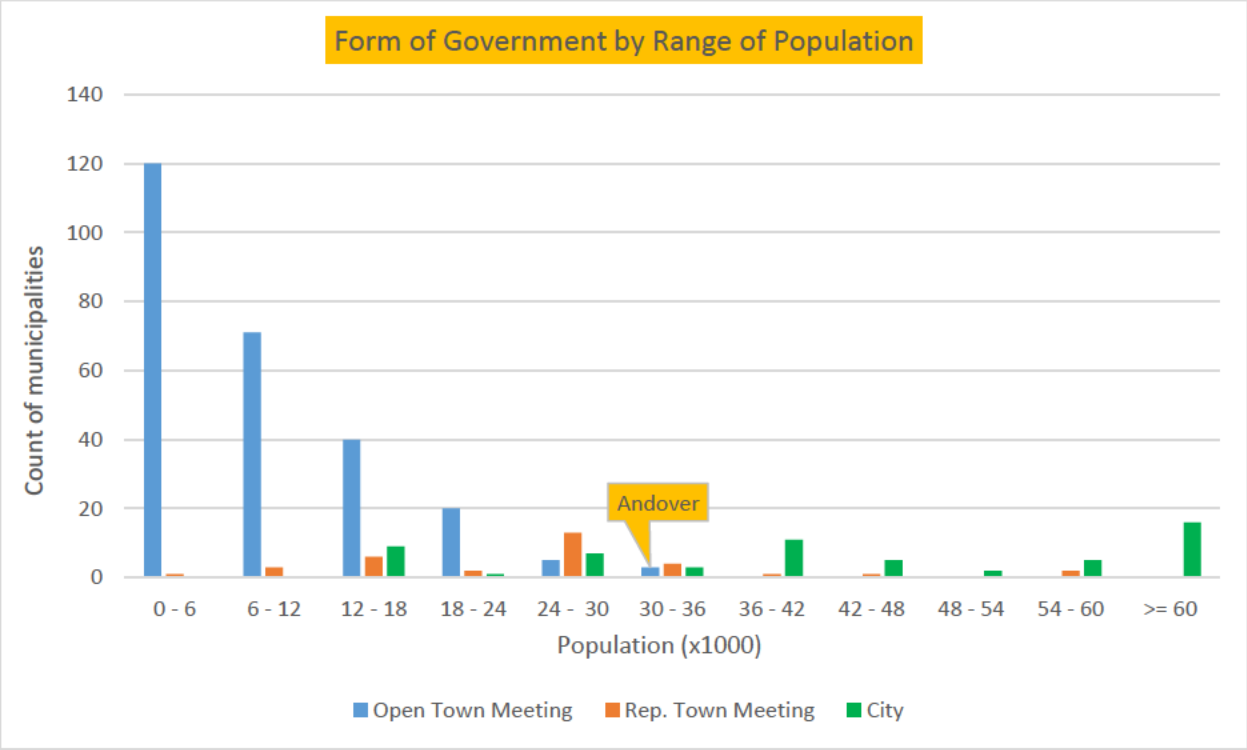


Figure 10 Number of municipalities with each form government, by population

Once a town's population reaches the 30,000 to 36,000 range where Andover lies, an effectively equal number of communities use each form of government; no form of government is preferred in this population range. Thus, it is unsafe to make any assertions that any form of government is preferred in this range.

City forms are dominant in municipalities above 36,000 inhabitants. 91% of municipalities above 36,000 use a City form, and 94% of the total population of all municipalities in this range live in municipalities with a City form of government. Intuitively, this is as one might expect. It is hard to envisage Open Town Meeting being manageable in municipalities the size of Boston, Springfield or Worcester.

Even in the "sweet spot" range for Representative Town Meeting of populations of 12,000 to 36,000, Representative Town Meeting is only barely more common than a City form. Of the municipalities in this range with either Representative Town Meeting or a City form, 57% of municipalities use Representative Town Meeting, and 56% of the total population of all municipalities in this range with either Representative Town Meeting or a City form live in towns with Open Town Meeting. That is, the data suggest that Representative Town Meeting would not be a preferred alternative to Open Town Meeting for Andover.

2. Relationship between household median income and form of government

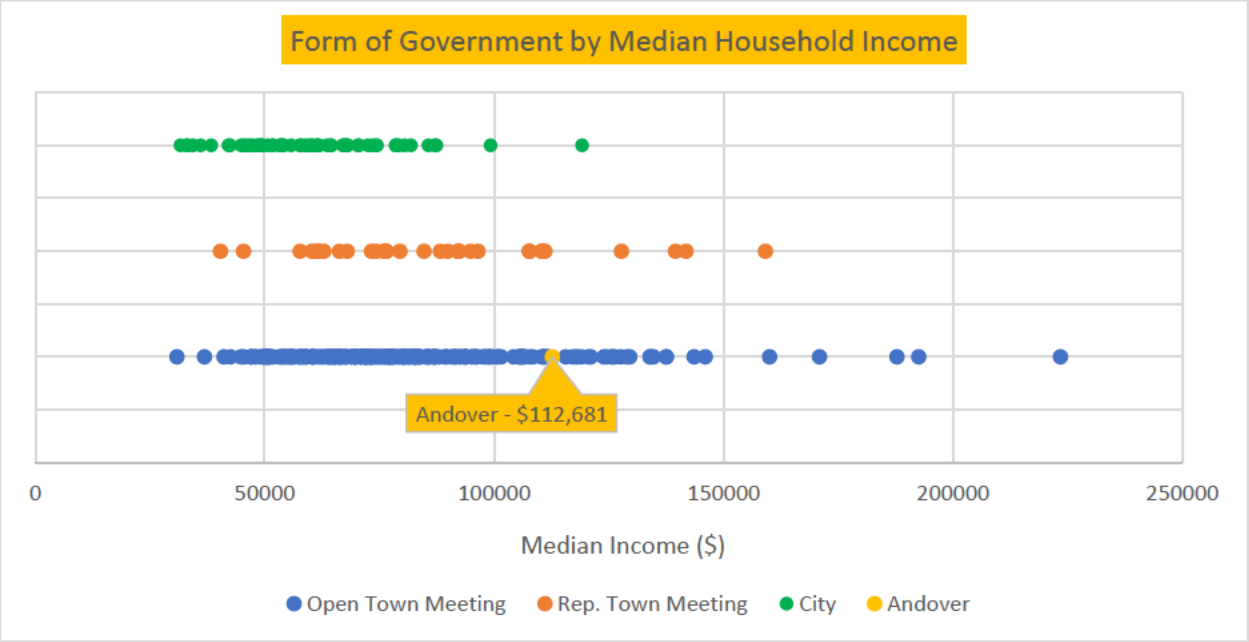


Figure 11 Relationship between median household income and form of government

Open Town Meeting is used in municipalities from the least to the most affluent. Representative Town Meeting is also used in a broad range. It is possible that the range is less broad than for Open Town Meeting simply because there are fewer towns with Representative Town Meeting than with Open Town Meeting, so it is not safe to draw any conclusions from the relative ranges. City forms are clearly concentrated in municipalities with lower median income, with Newton the main outlier (median income $119,000). That said, there are only 26 municipalities in total with median incomes above Newton's. It would appear that median income is not a reliable predictor of form of government.

There is a loose correlation between household median income and population as shown by Figure 12. Median income declines as population increases. The City of Boston is not shown so that the horizontal axis is not overly compressed, but Boston is consistent with this observation. Thus, median income and population cannot be considered to be independent variables. It is reasonable to argue that median income depends on population, not *vice versa*, as historically, larger municipalities were heavily industrialized and depended on large numbers of low-income workers.

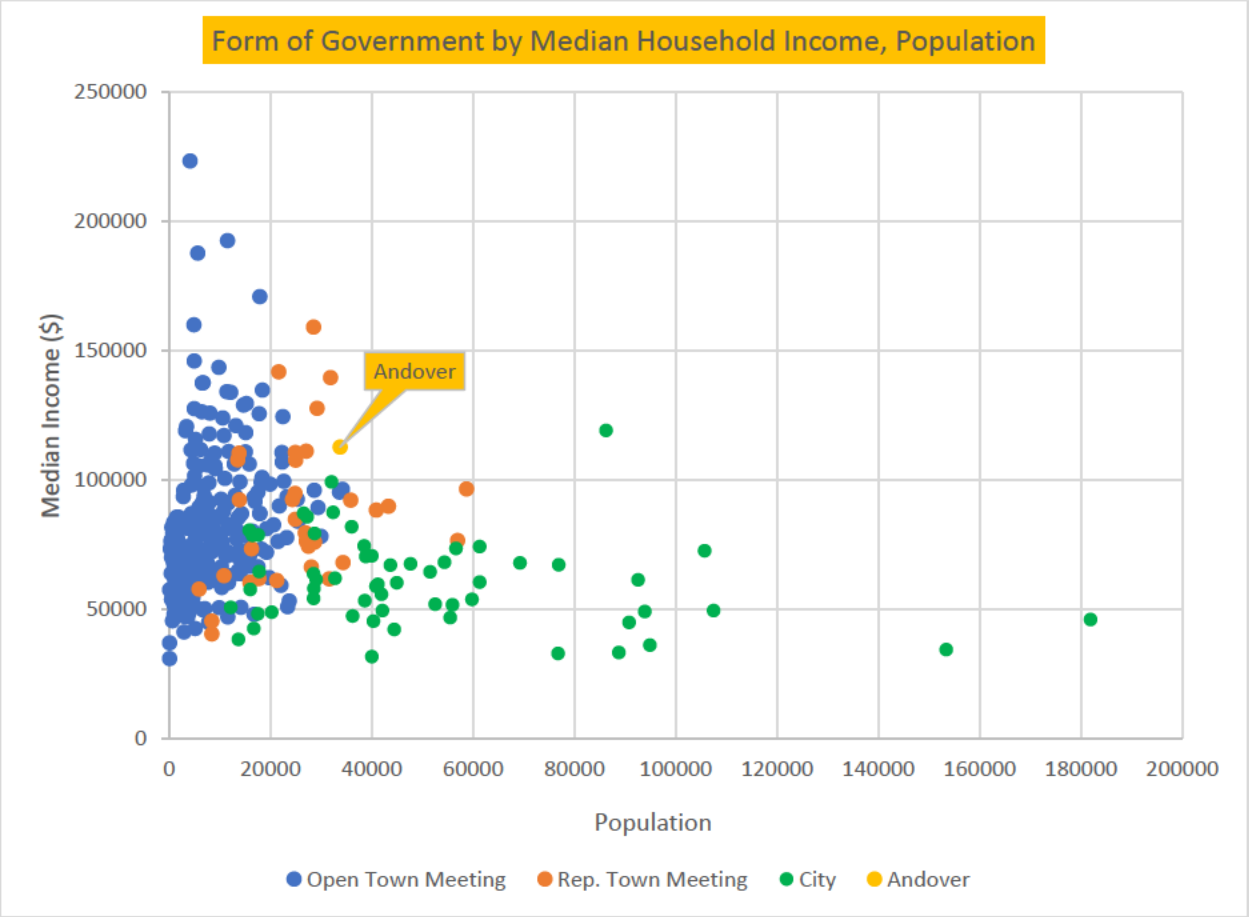


Figure 12 Relationship between median household income and population of municipality

3. Relationship between proportion of households speaking a language other than English at home and form of government

In municipalities in which up to 32.5% of households speak a language other than English at home, all three forms of government are used. All municipalities above 32.5%, of which there are 21, use a City form. Even though both Open Town Meeting and Representative Town Meeting are used in municipalities up to 32.5%, both are more common below 23% and less common from 23% to 32.5%. Andover, at 17.9%, lies towards the top but still within the range in which Town Meetings are most common. However, even in this range, no form of government is preferred.

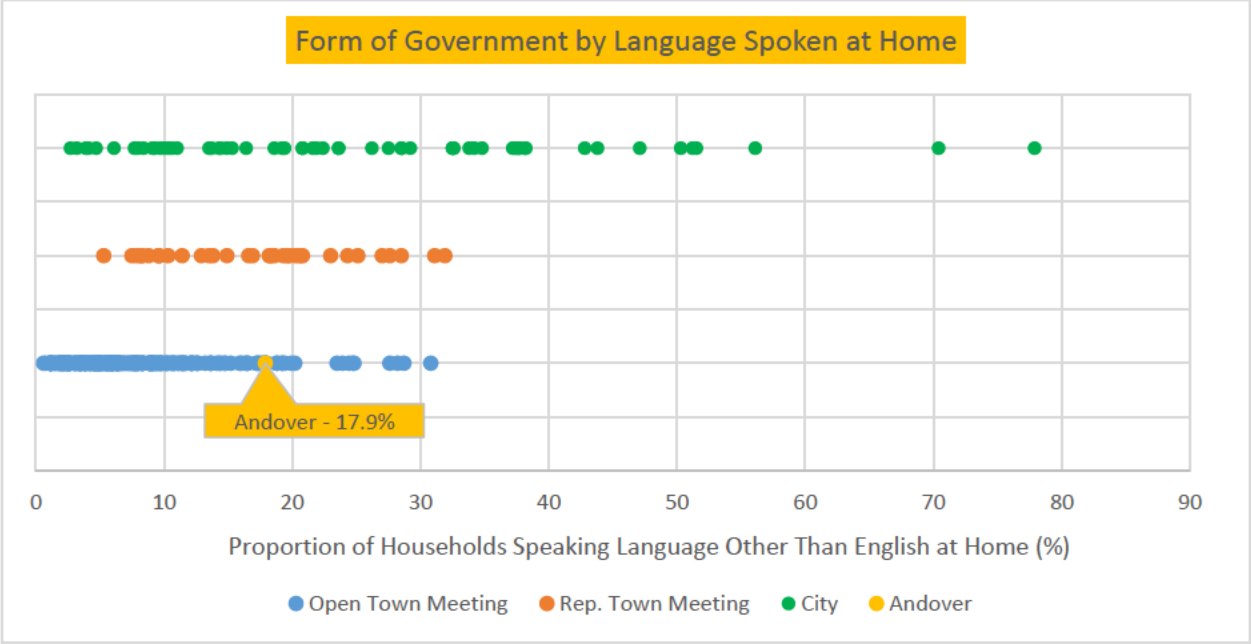


Figure 13 Relationship between percentage of households speaking a language other than English at home and form of government

In fact, just as with median income, there is a clear correlation between percentage of households speaking a language other than English at home and population as shown by Figure 14. Percentage of households speaking a language other than English at home increases as population increases. Again, The City of Boston is not shown so that the horizontal axis is not overly compressed, but Boston is consistent with this observation. Again, it is reasonable to argue that percentage of households speaking a language other than English at home depends on population, not *vice versa*, as historically, larger municipalities actively sought to attract immigrants.

The Committee stresses that speaking a language other than English at home does not necessarily imply lack of ability or confidence to speak English in social or business settings. Thus, even though a municipality might have a higher percentage of households speaking a language other than English at home, this does not necessarily imply that it would have a significantly higher proportion of residents who would be unable to participate fully in a Town Meeting conducted in English.

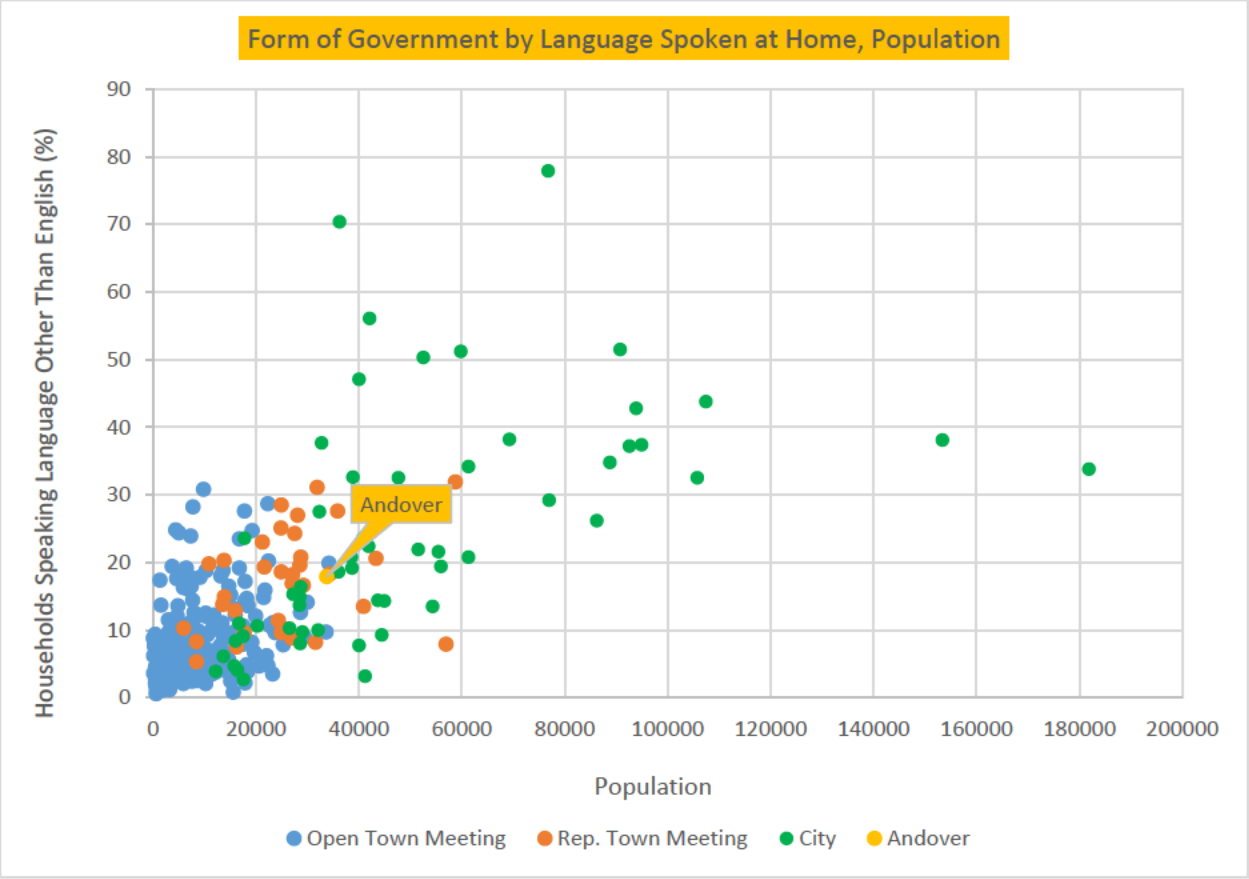


Figure 14 Relationship between percentage of households speaking a language other than English at home and population of municipality

4. Relationship between physical area and form of government

One can see from Figure 15 that there is no relationship between physical area of a municipality and its form of government for municipalities below 60 square miles. Almost all municipalities physically larger than this are seaside communities which include large areas of sea within their boundaries, the remainder are inland but also include large areas of water. These un-naturally large municipalities can be considered to be special cases and excluded from general conclusions about the relationship between physical area and form of government. Even amongst communities below 60 square miles, it is unsafe to draw any conclusions other than to say that especially large area does not preclude Town Meeting, and does not favor Open or Representative Town Meeting. This is perhaps counter-intuitive, in that one might postulate that

increased travel time within large municipalities to attend Town Meeting might favor a City form.

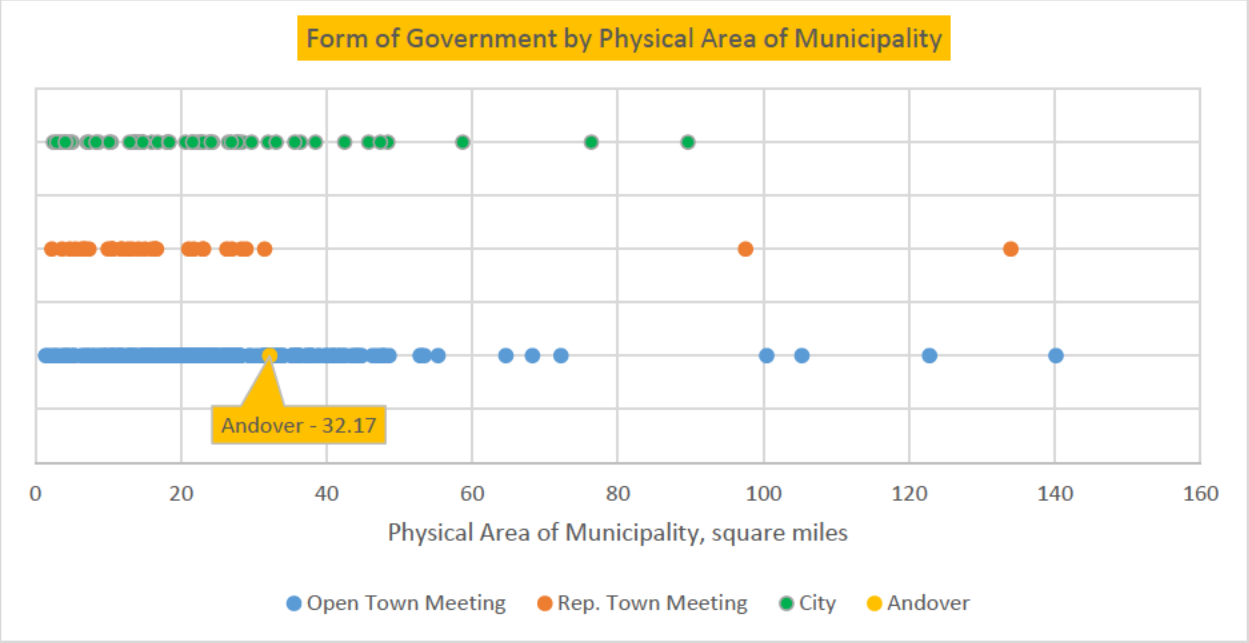


Figure 15 Form of Government by Physical Area of Municipality

5. Relationship between median age and form of government

Figure 16 shows that there is no relationship between median age in a municipality and its form of government. There are examples of municipalities using each form distributed throughout the range of median ages. Towns with Open Town Meeting have both the highest and lowest median age. While municipalities with either Representative Town Meeting or a City form cover smaller ranges of median ages, this is thought to be simply because there are fewer of each than of Open Town Meeting towns.

Open Town Meeting is very slightly more common in municipalities with a higher proportion of residents 65 years or older (this graph is not shown, as the effect is subtle and not visually obvious). This is consistent with the findings of the UMass Lowell survey of Andover residents which showed that older residents are more likely to vote and attend Town Meeting.

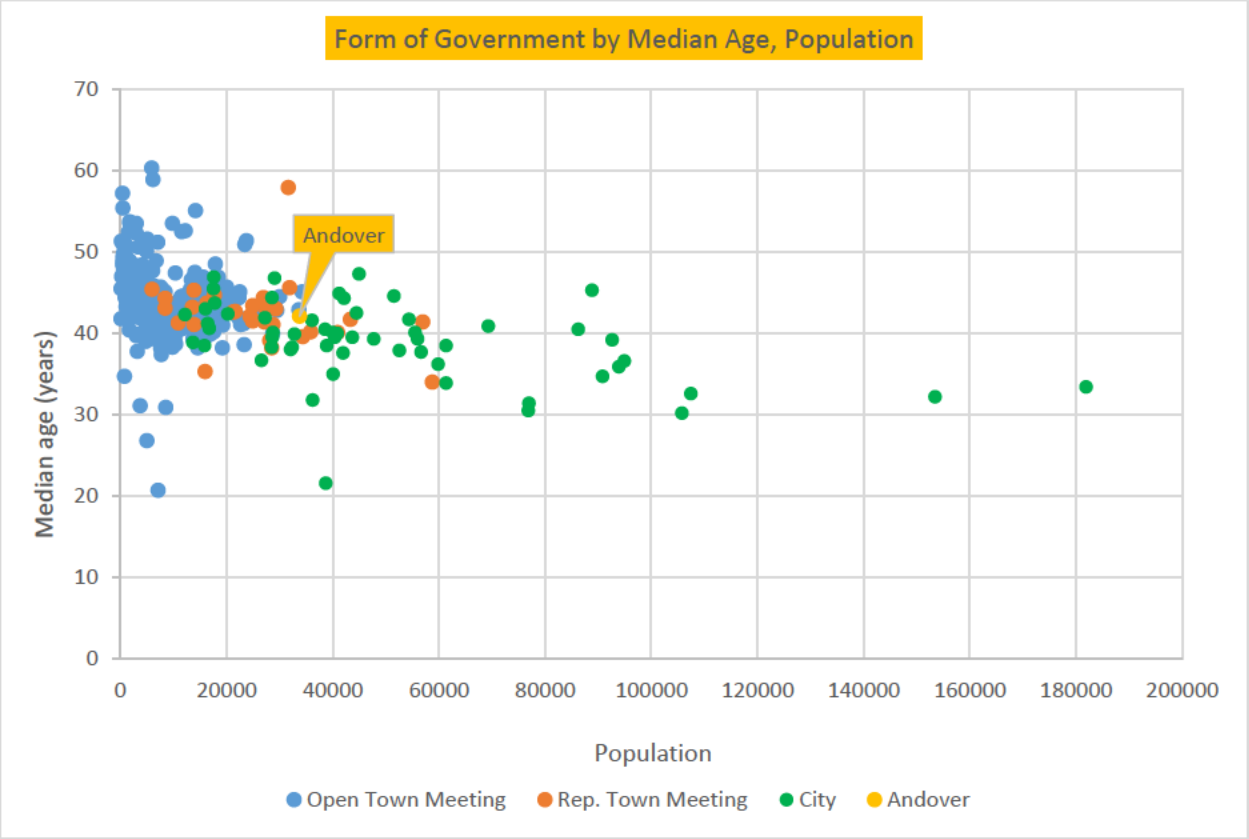


Figure 16 Form of government by population and median age

Summary

Population does correlate with form of government. Open Town Meeting is dominant in municipalities below 24,000 inhabitants, but then trends downwards. Representative Town Meeting is most prevalent in the range of 24,000 to 30,000, in which 13 towns use it, and then also trends downwards. City forms are dominant in municipalities above 36,000 inhabitants.

In municipalities with populations in the range of 30,000 to 36,000, where Andover lies, an effectively equal number of communities use each form of government; no form of government is preferred in this population range.

Median income and proportion of residents speaking a language other than English at home correlate with population, and thus, correlate with form of government indirectly.

Physical area and age distribution do not correlate with any other characteristic nor with form of government.

Appendix 5 – Quantitative Analysis of Resident Participation in Andover's Government

Introduction

The Committee performed an exhaustive, rigorous and detailed quantitative examination of participation of residents in Andover's government. Numerical information alone will not make any decision for the Committee. This study was conducted to assess the health and viability of Town Meeting, to determine whether assumptions or assertions based on informal assessments were indeed valid.

This work consumed many hundreds of hours and explored a wide range of metrics for Annual Town Election and Town Meeting participation, Town Meeting frequency and duration, Election and Town Meeting turnout, Town Meeting attendance patterns across multiple meetings and multiple nights of the same meeting, individuals' Town Meeting attendance including number of meetings and number of nights attended, and Town Meeting participation by precinct and demographic groups.

Method

Data for every Town Meeting and local election in Andover between 1998 and 2019 were retrieved from State records. 1998 is the first year in which data are available in electronic form, and 2019 was the latest year for which data were available at the time the examination was done. The data cover all 21 Town elections, and all 71 nights of all 31 Town Meetings (Annual and Special) in the period. The data are very fine-grained, showing attendance of individual voters at each night of each Town Meeting or each Town Election, and are exhaustive and complete, showing every voter at every night of every meeting or at every Town Election. To eliminate any chance of bias, analyses and visualizations were devised and implemented only after specific and neutral questions had already been posed.

The study tracked individual voters. However, the methodology ensured absolute voter confidentiality. State-assigned voter IDs were used to uniquely identify individuals rather than personally identifying data. Indeed, names and addresses were stripped from the data set immediately it was received from the State. Without names and addresses in the data set, it is simply not possible to identify to whom a voter ID belongs. This also ensured that no voter would be double-counted or lost if, for example, he or she were to move house in Andover thereby further increasing rigor, as an individual's voter ID is also guaranteed not to change while that individual remains a resident of one community.

The analysis used two different metrics for attendance, with each used as appropriate (neither is universally applicable in all cases).

1. Unique attendees

In most cases, one should eliminate double-counting and count people who attended once as one attendee, and count people who attended multiple times also as one attendee. The exact definition depends on context. When considering the total number of attendees at a Town Meeting, unique attendees comprise the people attending at least one night of that Town Meeting, with those attending multiple nights only counted once. When considering the total number of attendees of a number of Town Meetings across a period, unique attendees comprise the people who attended at least one meeting in that period, with those who attended multiple meetings in that period only counted once.

2. Sum of attendees

In a very few cases, it is appropriate to consider the sum of the people present across all nights of a Town Meeting, that is, the simple arithmetic sum of the people who attended each night. Here, anyone attending more than one night would be counted once per night on which they attended.

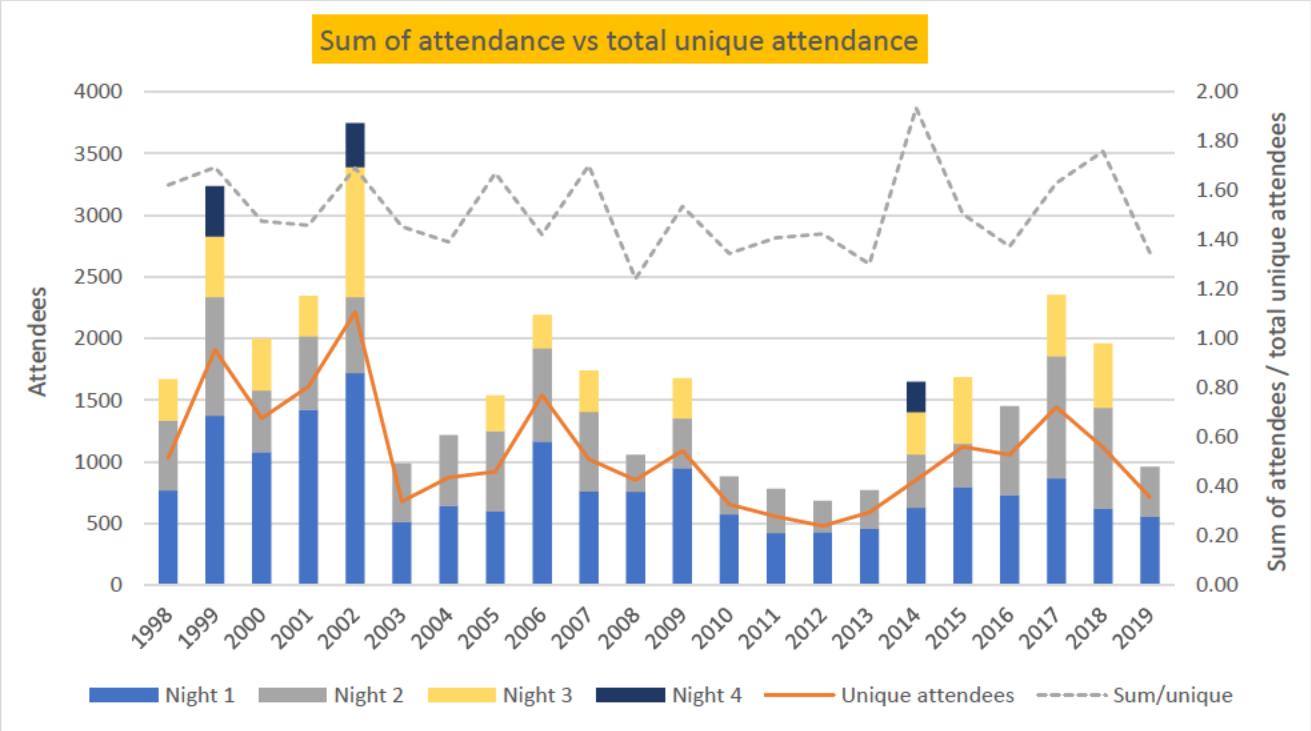


Figure 17 Sum of attendees compared to unique attendance (Annual Town Meetings only)

Figure 17 illustrates the magnitude of the error that would be introduced if the simpler sum of attendees had been used throughout. The number of unique attendees and the sum of attendance at each Annual Town Meeting in the period differs by a factor of the order of 1.5, and may reach a factor of 1.94. Derived values, such as average of all nights, would become equally incorrect had sum of attendees been used in their calculation. Special Town Meetings, which were all of one night's duration in this period, are not shown. For a meeting of one night, the number of

unique attendees must equal the sum of attendees for a one-night meeting. Including one-night meetings would only add visual clutter.

Thus, unless the sum of attendees was deemed to be appropriate for a specific analysis, unique attendees was used. It should be noted that this rigorous approach substantially increased the number of hours required for this work (adding literally hundreds of hours of volunteers' time). It should also be noted that, as discussed above, using unique attendees leads to lower but more accurate values for attendance at Town Meetings, so avoids inflated over-estimates of the health of Town Meeting.

Results

1. Overview of Election and Town Meeting participation, frequency and duration

Figure 18 shows that a cumulative total 53,864 voters were registered in Andover during the period 1998 to 2019. Of these, 14,856 voted in one or more Town Elections, equivalent to 27.6% of the cumulative total, and 9000 attended one or more Town Meetings, equivalent to 16.7% of the cumulative total. This graph does not consider how many times an individual voted or attended Town Meeting, just whether they did on at least one occasion.

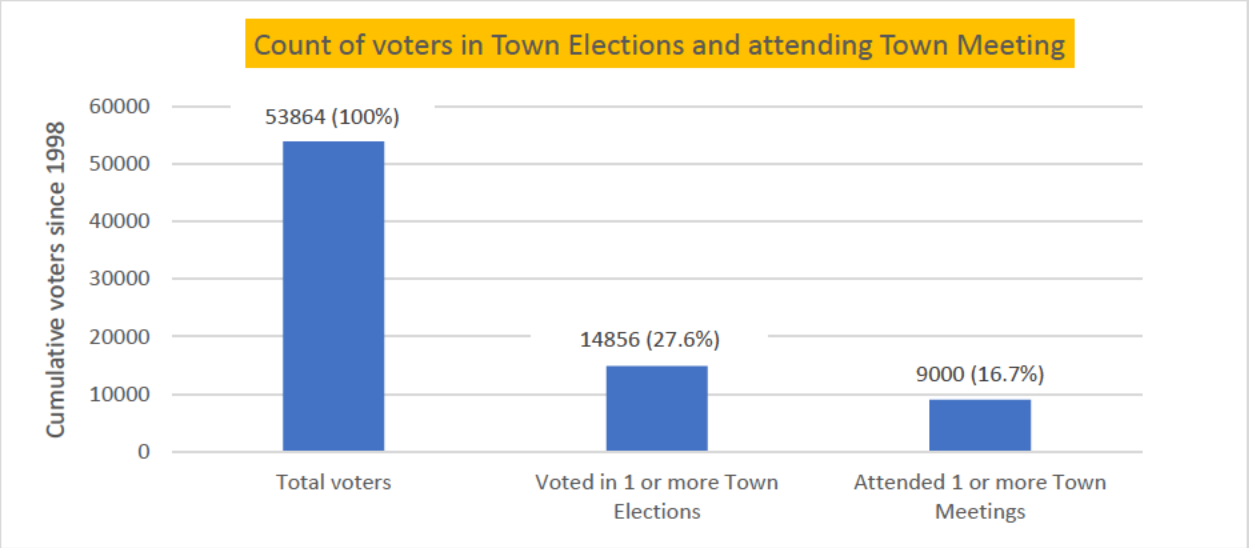


Figure 18 Cumulative count of registered voters who have voted in a Town Election or attended a Town Meeting

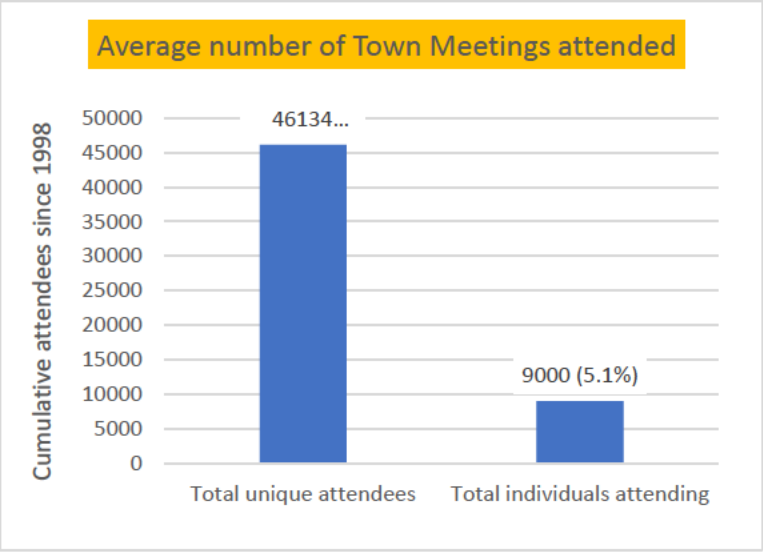


Figure 19 Average number of Town Meetings attended by those who have attended at least one

Figure 19 on the other hand does account for how often voters attend Town Meeting. There have been 46,134 total unique attendees (as defined previously) at all Town Meetings during the period 1998 to 2019, and 9000 individuals have attended one or more. By a simple ratio, this means that, of voters who have attended Town Meeting, each attends 5.1 meetings on average. This is only a macroscopic aggregate view, of course, and attendance patterns amongst individual voters is discussed in much greater detail later in this Appendix.

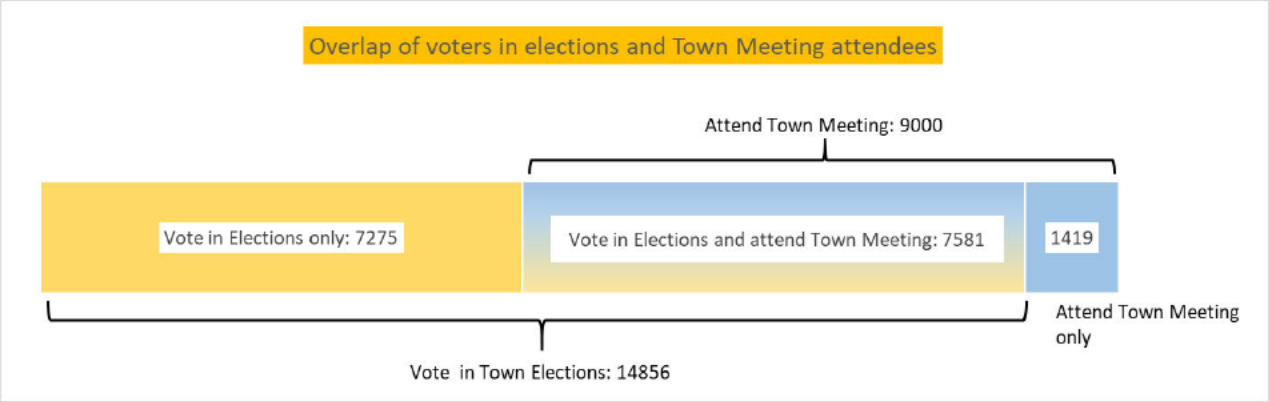


Figure 20 Overlap between voters in Local Elections and Town Meeting attendees

As discussed previously, 14,856 voters voted in one or more Town Elections, and 9000 voters attended one or more Town Meetings during the period 1998 to 2019. Figure 20 shows how these two groups overlap. 7581 individuals voted in at least one Town Election *and* attended at least one Town Meeting, 7275 voted in a Town Election but never attended Town Meeting, and 1419 attended Town Meeting but never voted in a Town Election. If one considers someone who either votes in a Town Election or attends Town Meeting to be engaged in the governance of Andover, then 16,275 residents engaged during the period 1998 to 2019. Of these, 44.7% only voted in a Town Election, 46.5% voted in a Town Election and attended Town Meeting, and 8.7% only attended Town Meeting. Indeed, of the 9000 who attended Town Meeting, 15.7% never voted in a Town Election.

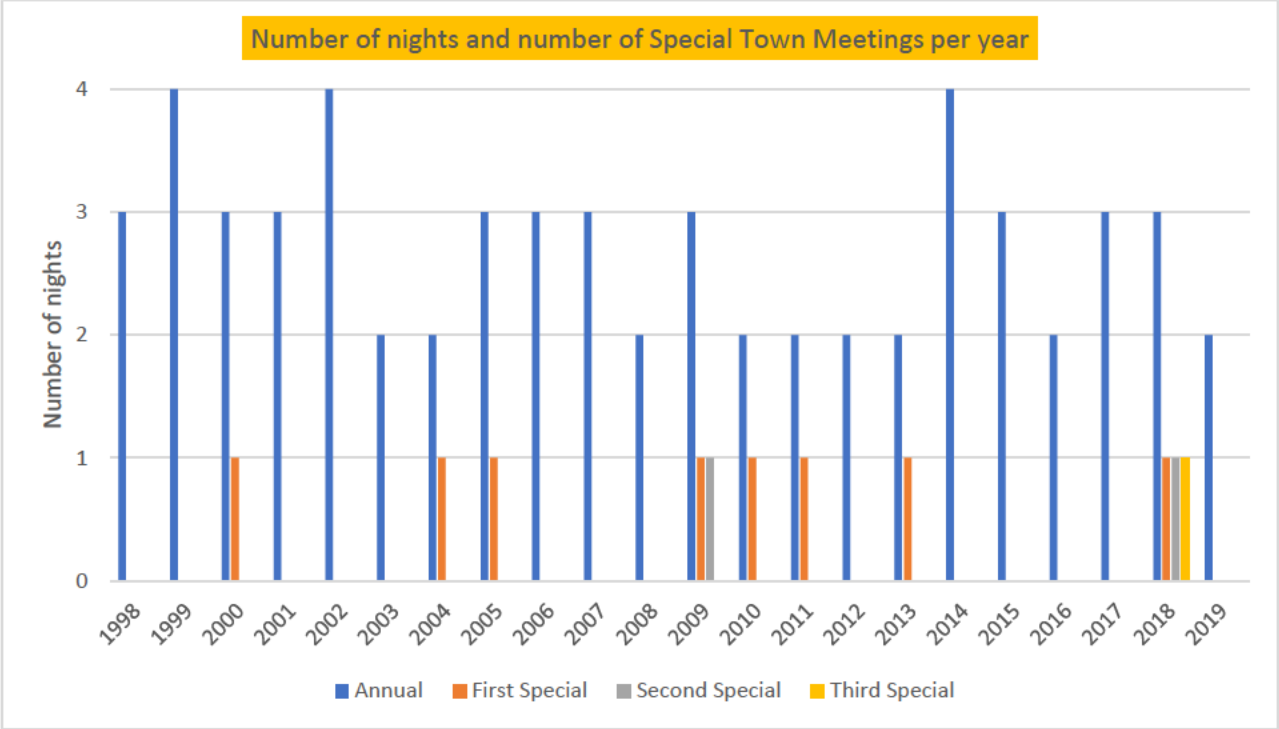


Figure 21Number of nights for Annual Town Meeting and number of Special Town Meetings per year

Finally, the frequency and duration of Town Meetings during the period 1998 to 2019 is shown in Figure 21. Of the 22 Annual Town Meetings, 9 spanned 2 nights, 10 spanned 3 nights, and 3 spanned 4 nights. If an Annual Town Meeting included an embedded Special Town Meeting, this is accounted for as a night of a Special Town Meeting. There does not appear to be a trend for either the number of nights to increase or decrease. Special Town Meetings were held in 8 of 22 years. One Special Town Meeting was held in 6 of these years, 2 Special Town Meetings were held in 1 of these years, and 3 Special Town Meetings held in 1 of these years (2018, when specific circumstances gave rise to multiple Special Town Meetings). All Special Town Meetings were of 1 night duration, from which one may conclude that the meetings are focused, and there is no general trend towards more Special Town Meetings per year.

Special Town Meetings remain "special" and emphasis remains on Annual Town Meeting. (If Annual Town Meeting content were being cannibalized into Special Town Meetings, Annual Town Meeting duration would be declining). Consideration of the Warrants for Special Town Meetings also shows this. Andover is not inadvertently transitioning towards the model in which Annual Town Meeting is divided across sessions throughout the year by using Special Town Meetings as substitutes for additional Annual Town Meetings.

2. Election and Town Meeting turnout

Figure 22 shows how turnout for local elections in Andover and unique attendance at Annual Town Meetings varied year-on-year during the period 1998 to 2019. The Committee believes

that Town Elections and Annual Town Meeting are directly comparable as they are closely aligned conceptually.

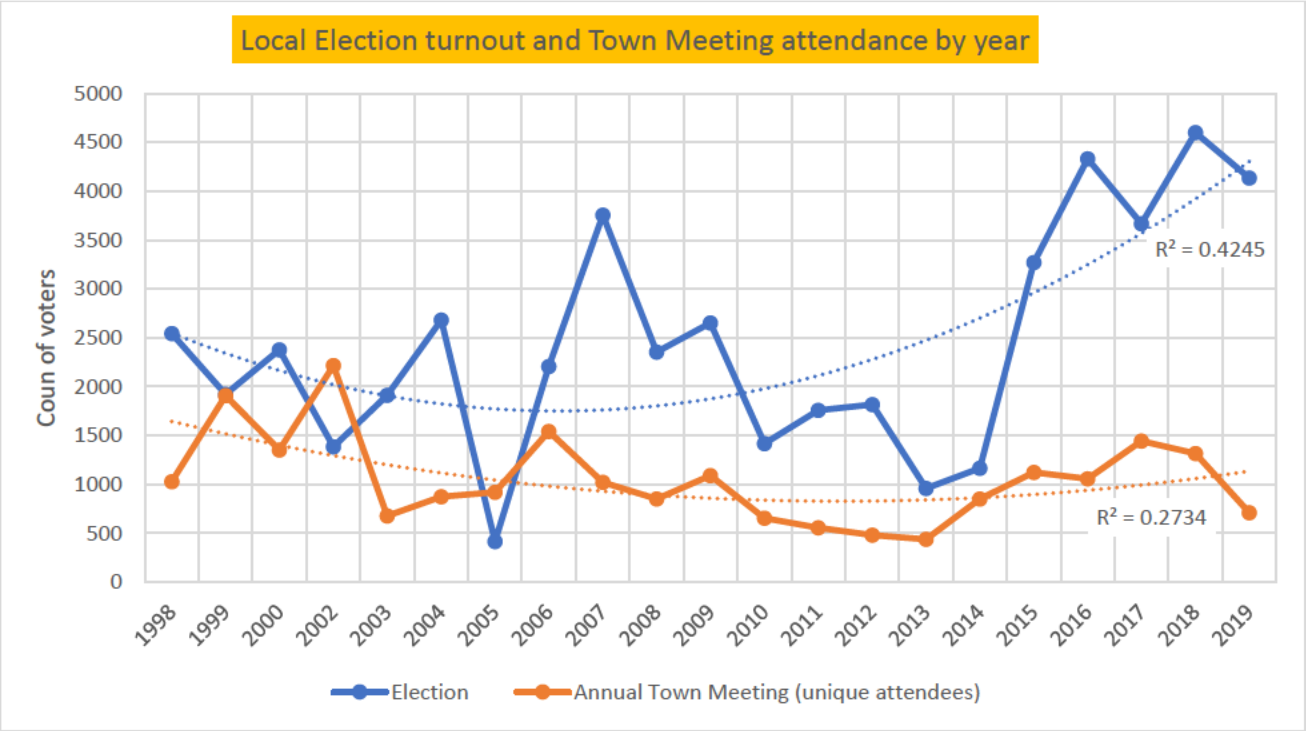


Figure 22 Year-on-year Local Election turnout and Annual Town Meeting, as count of voters

The solid lines show actual turnout and attendance, the dashed lines are smoothed curves that generally accepted statistical metrics show to be a reasonable fit. The R^2 value measures goodness of fit of a trend line. The R^2 value of 0.42 for election turnout shows a very good fit, albeit with a few data points that are a long way from the line. The lower R^2 value of 0.27 for Annual Town Meeting indicates that the trend line is a good representation of aggregate behavior, but that individual points are scattered some distance either side of the line. It is apparent from the smoothed curves that both Town Meeting attendance and local election turnout dipped between 2010 and 2013, but both have recovered. Election turnout has been at an all-time high in most recent elections. Over 4500 voters turned out for the 2018 Annual Town Election. Attendance at Annual Town Meeting has been as high as 2215, has recently been in the range of 1000 to 1500 attendees consistently, and was of the order of 500 voters even in the "lean years" of 2010 to 2013, only ever dropping below 500 once.

Figure 23 shows the same data expressed as percentage of the total number of registered voters. The number of registered voters in Andover increased by 15% across the period although not smoothly and actually declined in a number of years (especially 2003 and 2015). This is not a major influence on turnout nor Town Meeting attendance.

Election turnout has been as low as 5% of the total electorate, has generally been in the range of 7.5% to 12.5%, and has been close to 20% in recent years, reaching 22% in 2018. Annual Town

Meeting attendance has ranged as high as 10.7% of the total electorate, but more typically, averages 5% to 6%.

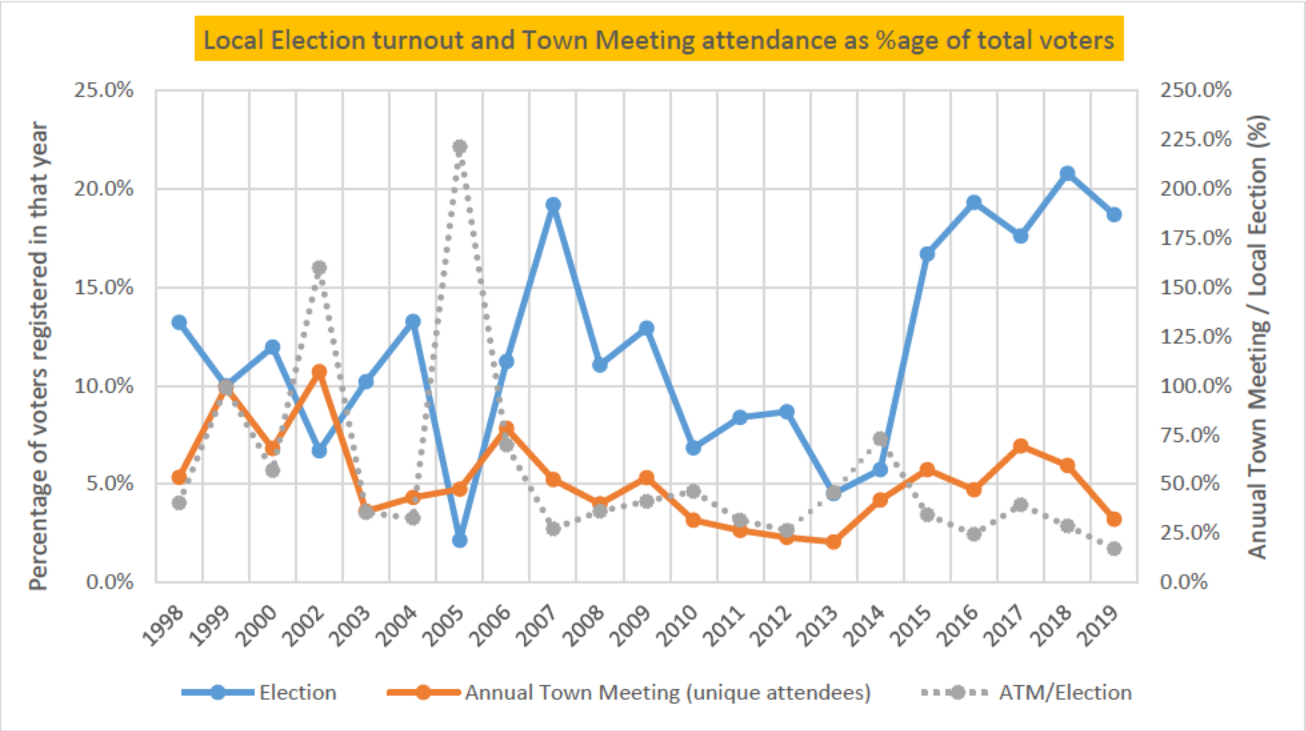


Figure 23 Year-on-year local election turnout and Annual Town Meeting, as percentage of registered voters

In any year, at least 25% of the people who vote in the local election attend Town Meeting. The Committee believes that turnout for local elections is the appropriate metric for comparison because this measures the number of people who have made some effort to participate in Andover's governance to some level. In two years, Annual Town Meeting attendance significantly exceeded Election turnout. In those years, Annual Town Meeting was the principal way in which residents engaged in local government.

3. Town Meeting attendance patterns

The charts in the previous section show that both election turnout and Annual Town Meeting attendance fluctuate markedly. Figure 24 shows that attendance is particularly high at Town Meetings with "big ticket" items on the warrant that either have long-term effects on the town or on which voters feel very strongly at a personal level. To some albeit lesser extent, these "big ticket" items also influence election turnout.

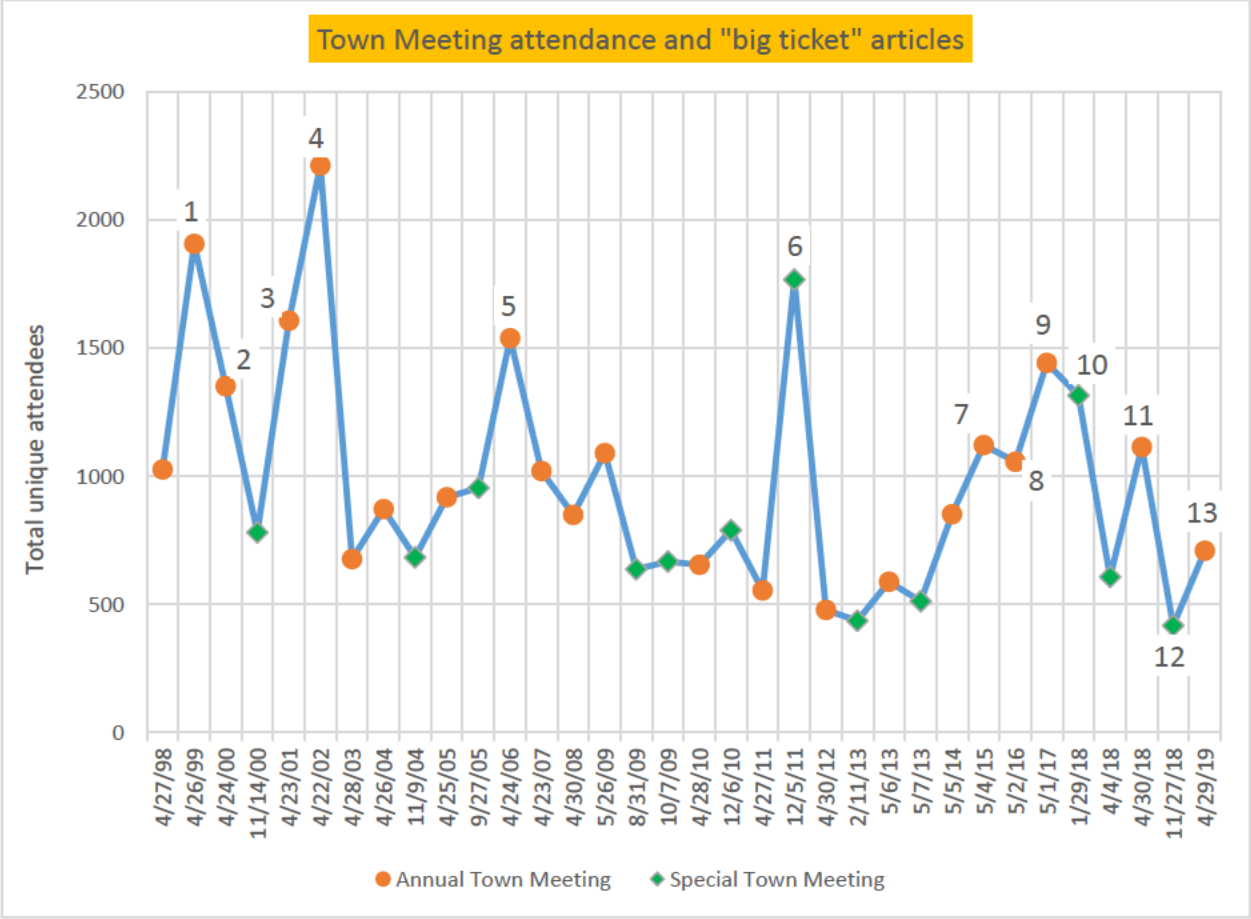


Figure 24 Total attendance at Annual Town Meeting by year, highlighting key issues discussed

Key:

1. Public Safety Center Override, Community Preservation Act, Cross-districting
2. Middle school construction -Wood Hill
3. Zoning Recodification
4. School Override, Zoning bylaws, Playing Fields
5. School budget, Wetlands
6. Youth Center
7. School budget, Zoning bylaws
8. Multiple $1MM - $2MM appropriations, Zoning bylaws
9. School budget, Zoning bylaws, Dogs
10. Marijuana, Dascomb Road
11. North Reading water, Marijuana
12. Ballardvale Fire Station
13. Senior Center, Select Board renaming

High attendance is observed at those meetings that include Articles that

- Sanction atypically large Capital Projects or sanction a number of projects that cumulatively amount to a large sum (marked in red in the key)
- Change Zoning at a macro scale (marked in blue in the key)

- Relate to proposed School operating budgets and include line items that are controversial (marked in green in the key)
- Relate to "one-off" topics on which voters feel particularly strongly, such as Marijuana (marked in purple in the key)

Attendance is substantially lower at any Town Meeting that does not include Articles in one or more of the above categories.

Some of these Town Meetings help refine the definition of what constitutes a “big ticket” item. The Ballardvale Fire Station project discussed at the September 27th, 2018, Special Town Meeting called for a substantial appropriation, but attendance was not commensurately high. It seems that there must be some degree of contention around an Article for it to attract voters. The Columbia Gas Special Town Meeting (data only available after this study was concluded) also had a comparatively small turnout and it is fair to say that this matter was considered a no-brainer. Indeed, even attendance at the April 29th, 2019, Town Meeting was driven as much by the article to rename the Select Board as that appropriation for the Senior Center. The former occupied much more of the Meeting’s time, whereas the latter was again, non-controversial. That said, even the Select Board renaming was not a true “big ticket” item, as it was considered critically important by a specific constituency (mainly late-teen voters) but less so by Town Meeting as a whole.

During the lean years of 2010 to 2013, attendance at Annual Town Meetings was of the order of 500 voters. None of the Annual Town Meetings in this period included Articles of the type that drive high attendance, so by our hypothesis, this does not indicate a downward trend in overall attendance. It is noteworthy that 1768 voters attended the December 5th, 2011, Special Town Meeting when the Youth Center funding was considered. We see this as a strong corroboration of our hypothesis.

Notwithstanding, a minimum of 500 to 600 voters attend each Meeting irrespective of the Warrant. Analysis presented later suggests that about 50% of this “baseline” attendance comprises voters who attend regularly. That is, every meeting includes a core of at least 250 voters who are experienced attendees.

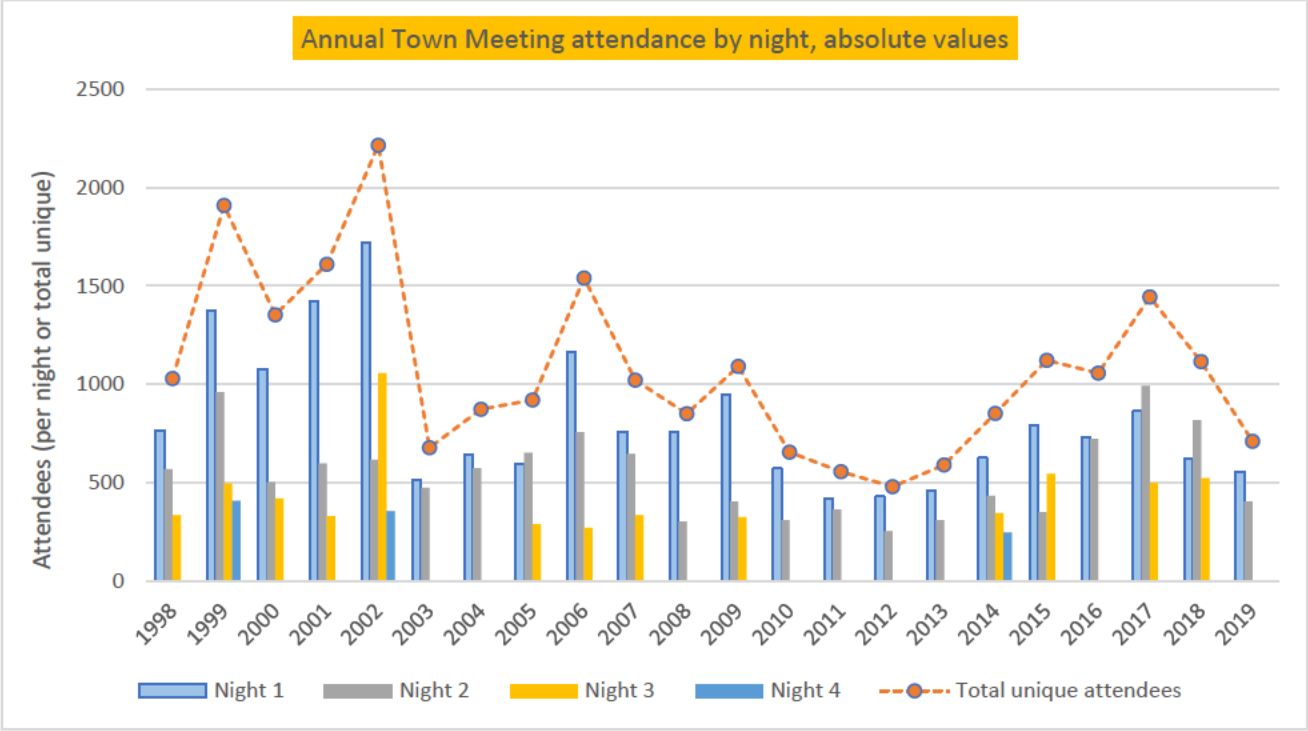


Figure 25 Annual Town Meeting by night, absolute values

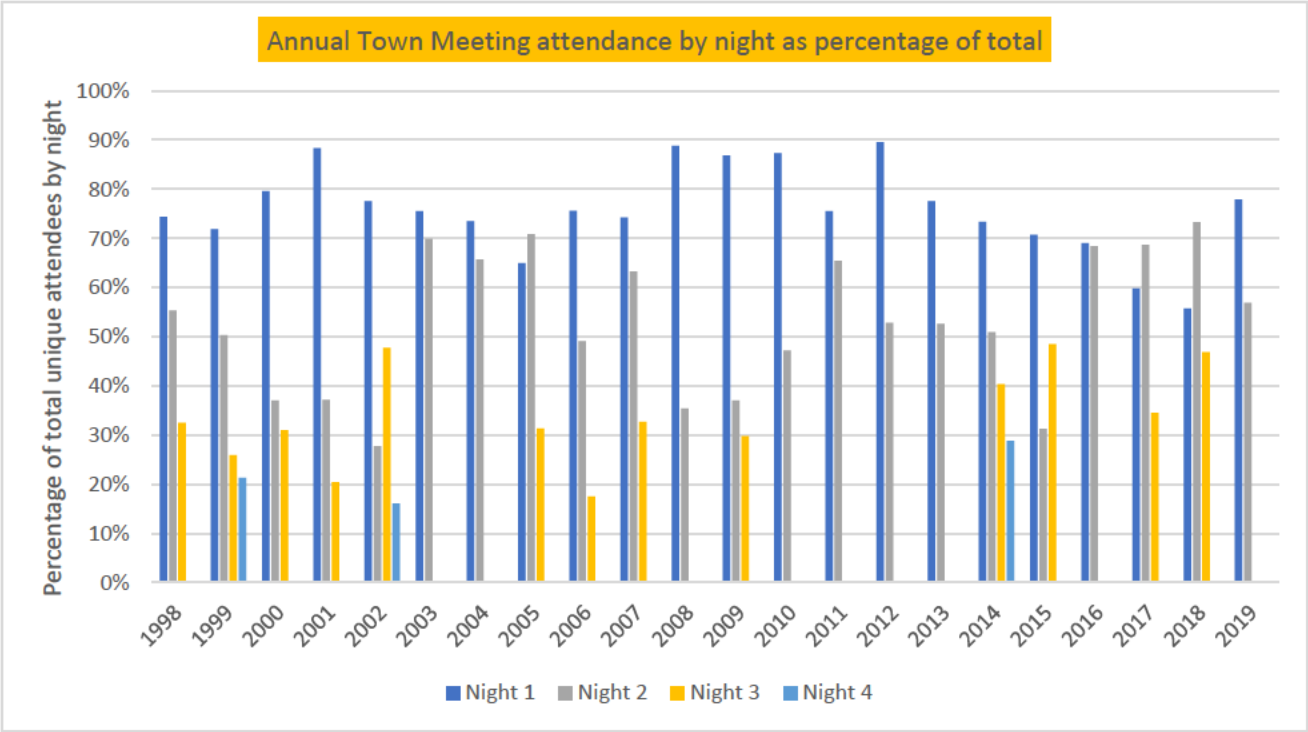


Figure 26 Annual Town Meeting attendance by night as percentage of total attendees

Figure 25 and Figure 26 break down attendance on each night of each Annual Town Meeting as absolute numbers and as percentage of the total unique attendees at that meeting respectively. Again, Special Town Meetings are not shown as none extended over multiple nights during the period under consideration. The first night is typically the highest attended, but the second night has surpassed the first at three Annual Town Meetings and come close at a further three. When not the highest attended night, the second night typically comes second, although the third night has surpassed the second night for second place on three occasions. The fourth night (if held) has always been least attended.

The ranking of the second and third nights aligns with the nights on which big ticket items are discussed. The first night naturally includes significant topics even if there are no big ticket items. This further reinforces the previous conclusion that higher attendance is seen when the Warrant includes big ticket Articles, and in fact, shows that this applies not just to Meetings as a whole, but specific nights of Meetings.

Figure 27 and Figure 28 show how many attendees at each Annual Town Meeting attended one, two, three or four of the nights of that meeting, expressed as absolute numbers and as percentage of the total unique attendees at that meeting respectively. 35% to 55% of the voters attending any meeting attend more than one night. The remainder attend one night. This is not correlated with total turnout or to presence of big-ticket Articles.

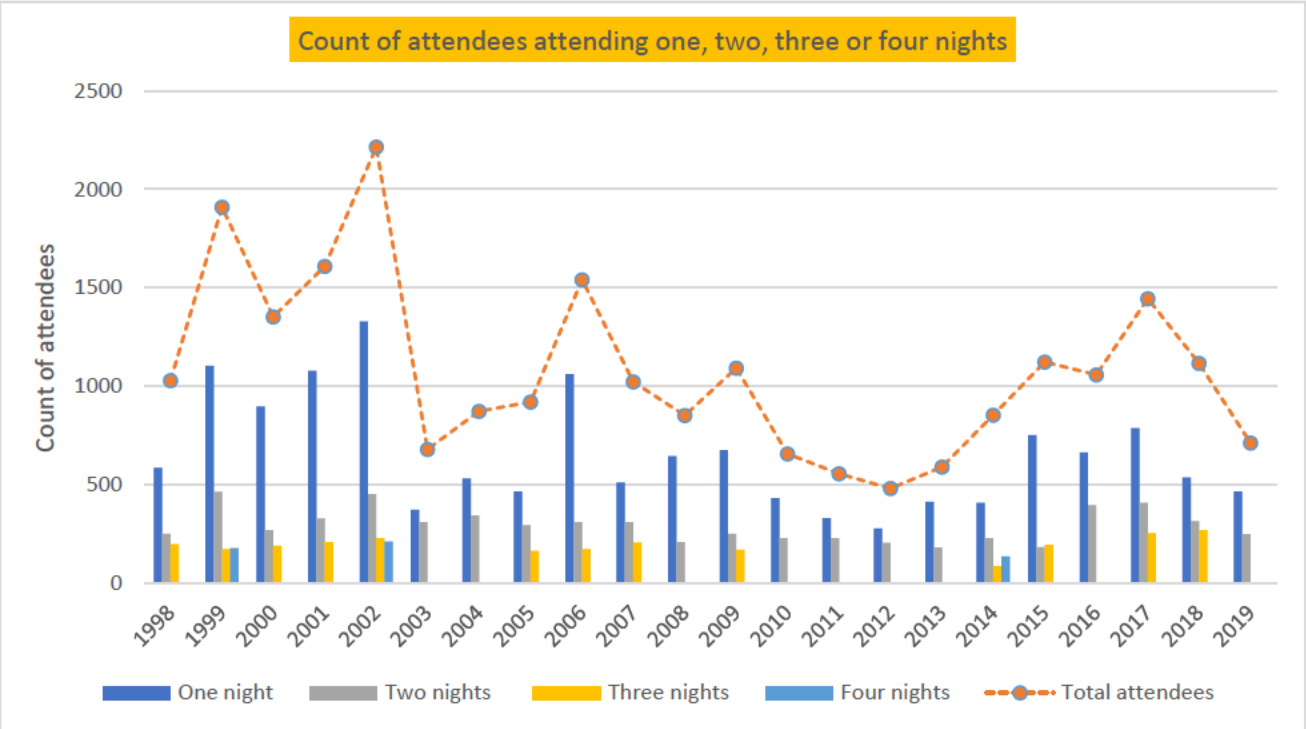


Figure 27 Count of attendees attending one, two, three or four nights of each Annual Town Meeting

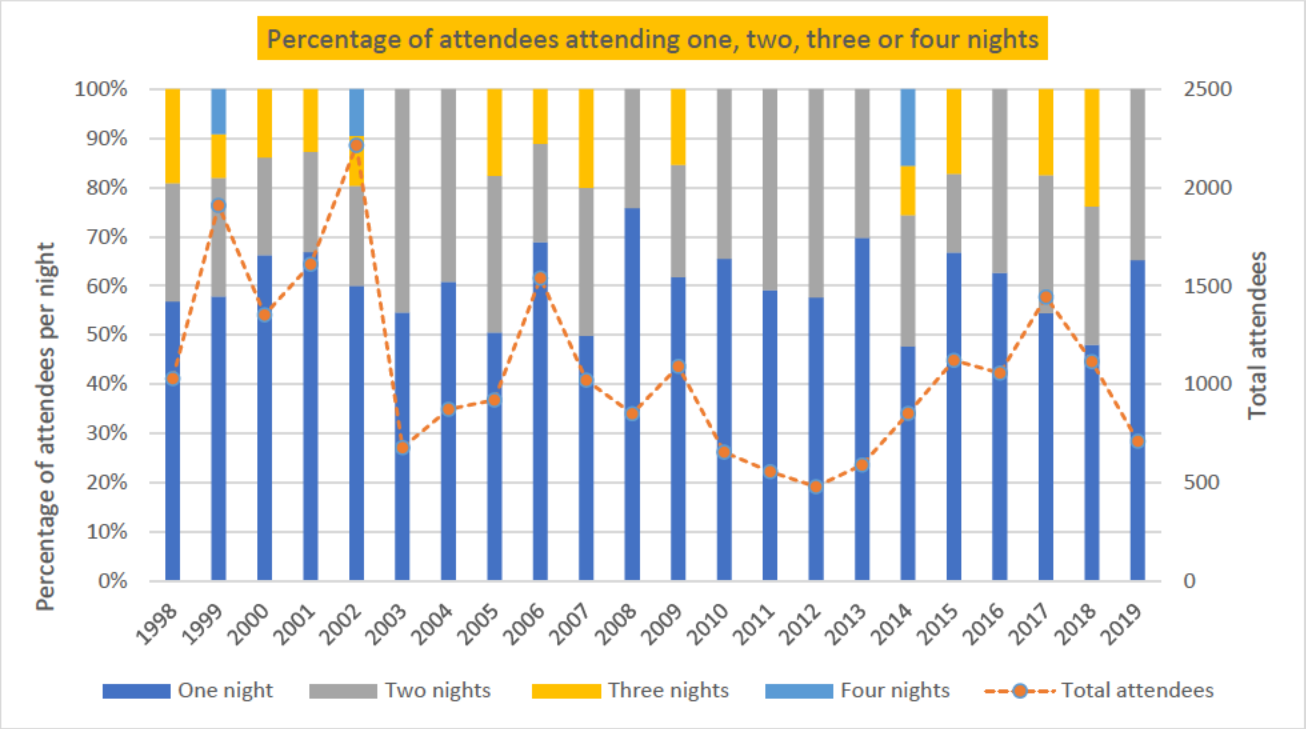


Figure 28 Percentage of attendees attending one, two, three or four nights of each Annual Town Meeting

Finally, Figure 29 and Figure 30 re-present the data shown on the previous graphs, but showing on which nights people attended. These graphs confirm the conclusions drawn from Figure 27 and Figure 28

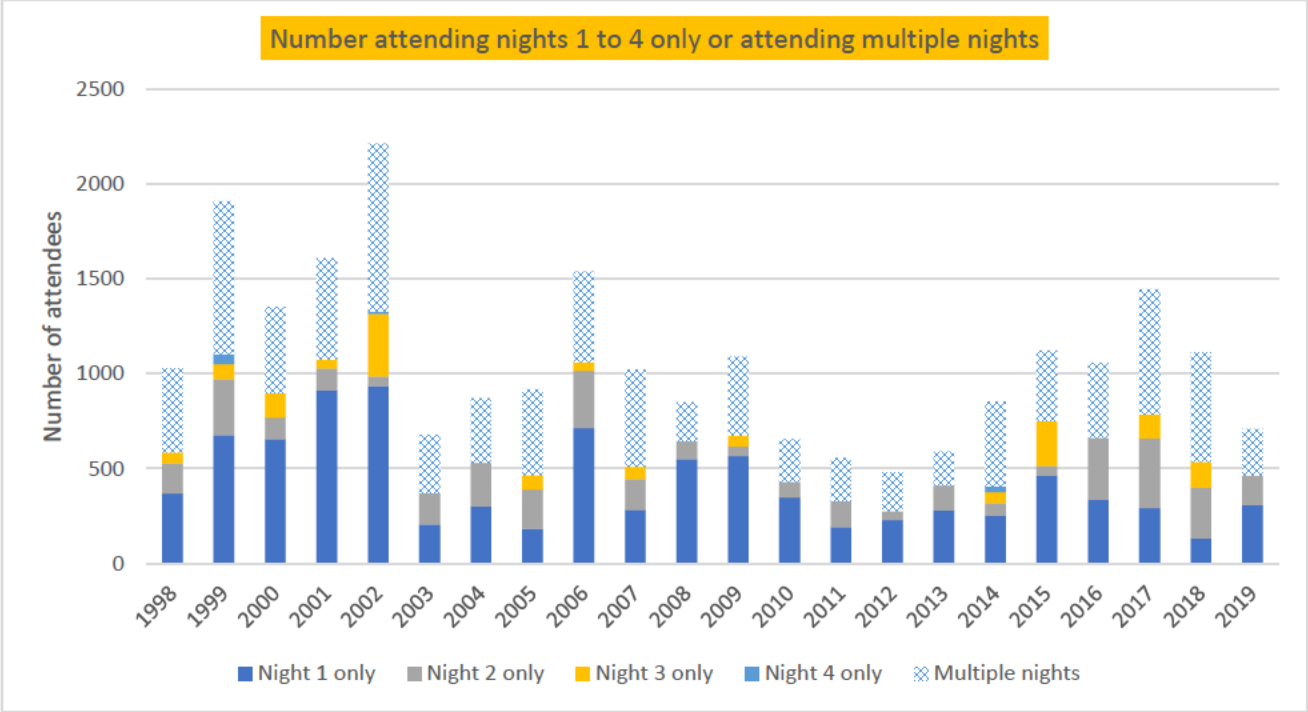


Figure 29 Number of attendees attending nights 1 to 4 only or attending multiple nights of Annual Town Meeting

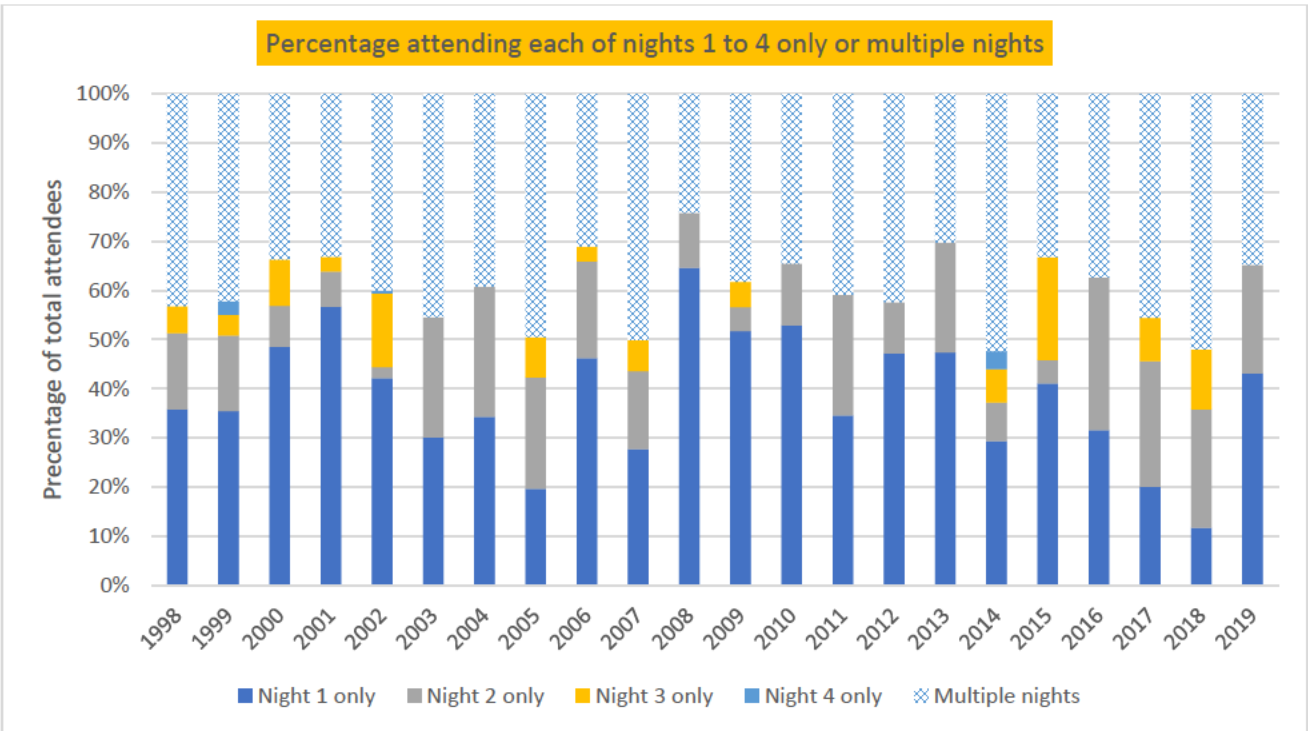


Figure 30 Percentage of attendees attending nights 1 to 4 only or attending multiple nights of Annual Town Meeting

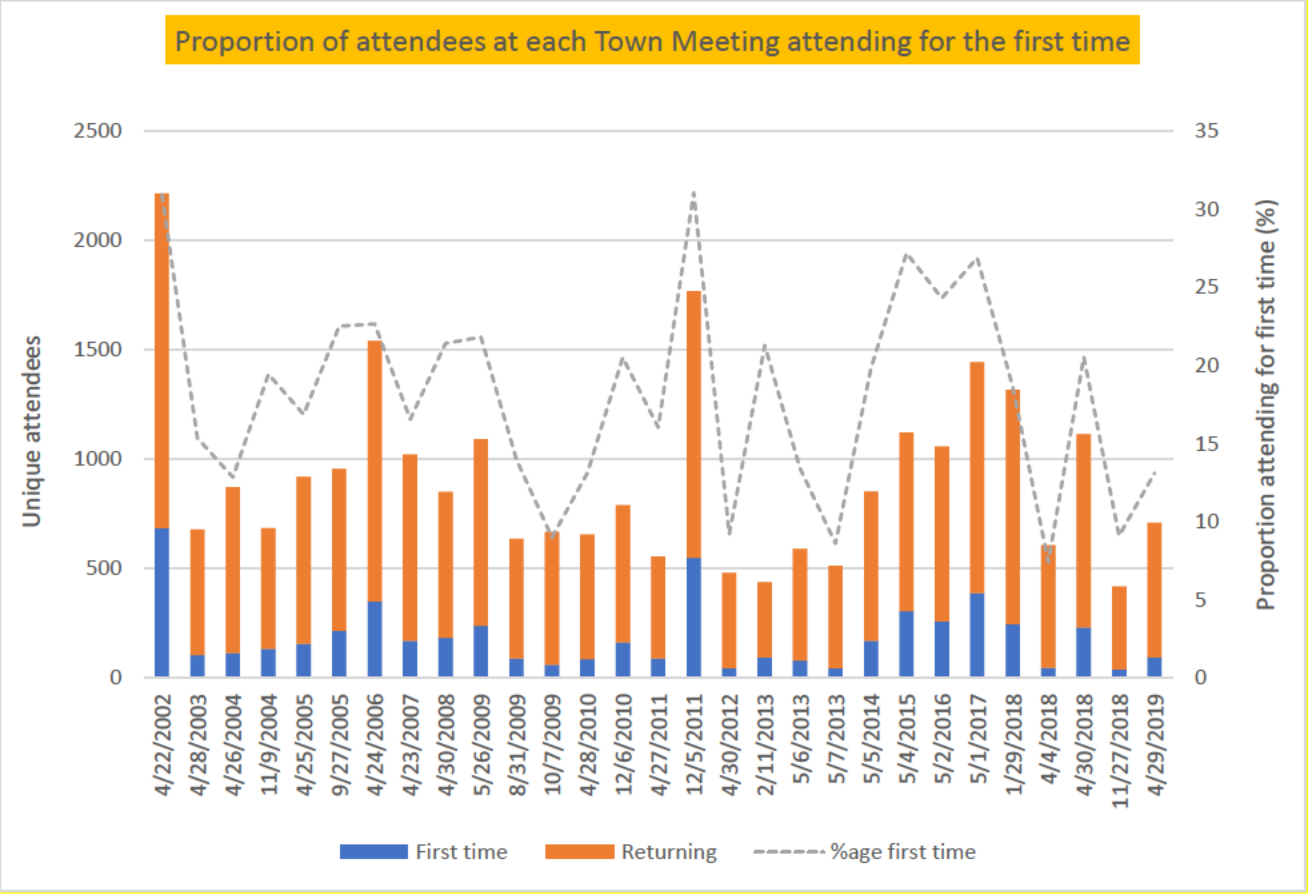


Figure 31 Proportion of attendees at each Town Meeting since 4/22/2002 attending for the first time

Attendance at any meeting comprises regular attendees, infrequent attendees and first-time attendees. Figure 31 shows that the proportion of first-time attendees correlates roughly with overall attendance, that is, that first-time attendees (who, by extension, might be one-off attendees) are somewhat more likely to attend meetings at which "big ticket" items are debated. That said, new attendees never exceed 31% of those present. Deeper analysis shows that, on any given night, 60% to 80% of attendees have attended 5 or more previous nights and 40% - 80% (typically around 60%) have attended 10 or more previous nights, and this is discussed in more detail later. The analysis starts 5 meetings into the period. Prior to that, it is possible that voters would appear to be first-timers simply because no data were available for Town Meetings prior to 1998.

4. Town Meeting attendance – individuals' behaviors

In this section, results showing attendance by individuals are presented. The reader is reminded that State-assigned voter IDs were used to uniquely identify individuals rather than personally identifying data. Indeed, names and addresses were stripped from the data set immediately it was

received from the State. Without names and addresses in the data set, it is simply not possible to identify to whom a voter ID belongs. Anonymity is guaranteed by this methodology.

Figure 32 shows that some individuals have attend a lower number of nights of more meetings, others have attended a higher number of nights of fewer meetings, and some have attended a high proportion of the nights of many meetings. The number shown in each cell is number of voters who have attended that combination of meetings and nights.

The cells on the leading diagonal represent voters who attended one night of each meeting they attended. Amongst attendees of a lower numbers of meetings, some attendees attended one night per meeting while others attended two or even three nights per meeting but for fewer meetings in total. As the numbers of meetings attended increases, fewer and fewer voters attended one night per meeting, and more and more attended a higher proportion of meetings. Amongst voters who have attended 21 meetings and above, none attended one night per meeting, and both the minimum and maximum number of nights per meeting increase rapidly. The strong yellow cells (indicating the number of nights attended by the most attendees of that number of meetings) moves progressively towards higher numbers of nights per meeting

All 3 voters who have attended all 34 meetings since 1998 have identified themselves to the Committee and all are still registered voters in Andover.

It should be noted that some voters who appear in this chart were only residents for some of the period being studied. That is, they simply did not have time to attend more meetings, and their placement in this chart does not reflect their will to attend. To address this, one would need to consider how many meetings and/or nights that individual has attended and compare this to the number of meetings/nights that he or she might have attended, that is, that were held while the individual was registered to vote in Andover. While this is feasible, it would require substantial effort and was thought to be past the point of diminishing returns.

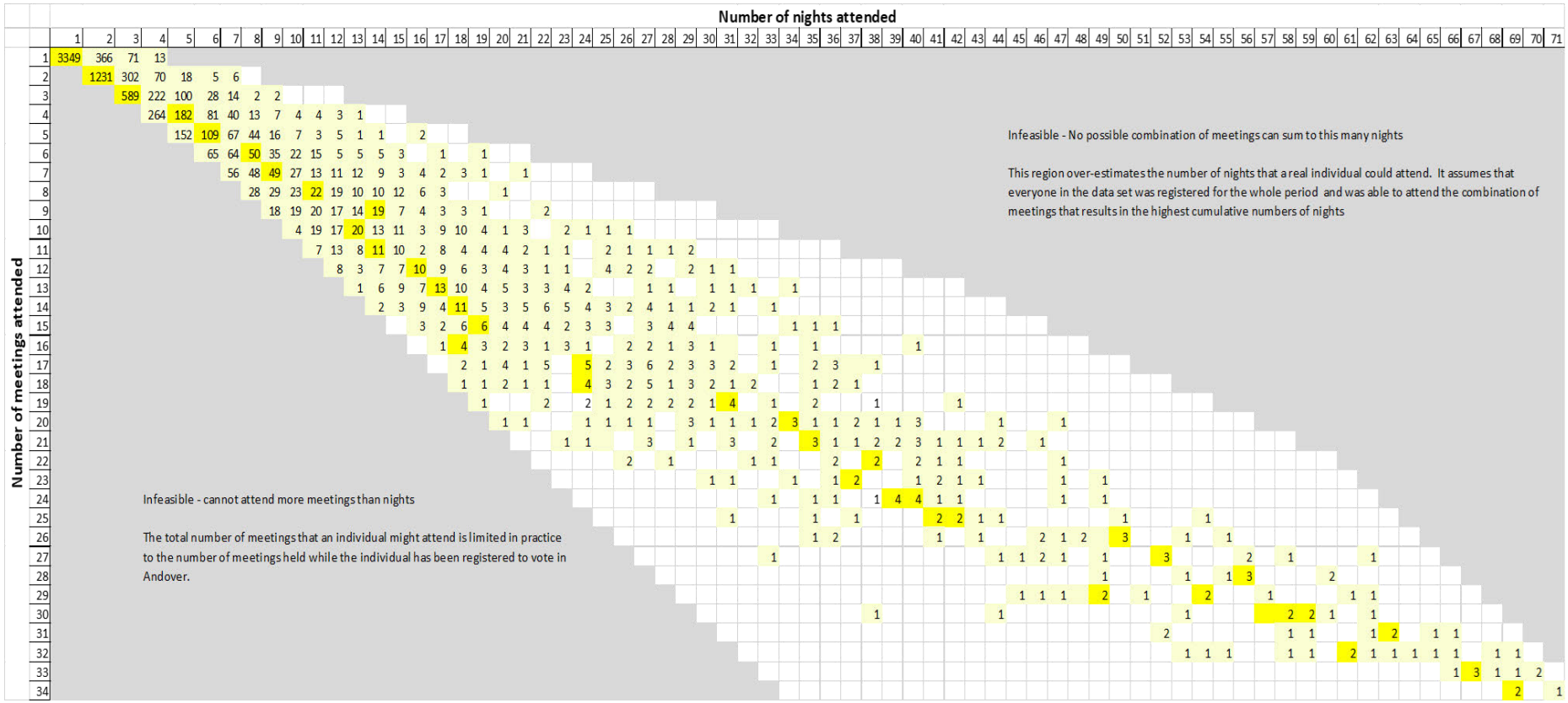


Figure 32 Number of Town Meetings and number of nights attended by each individual voter

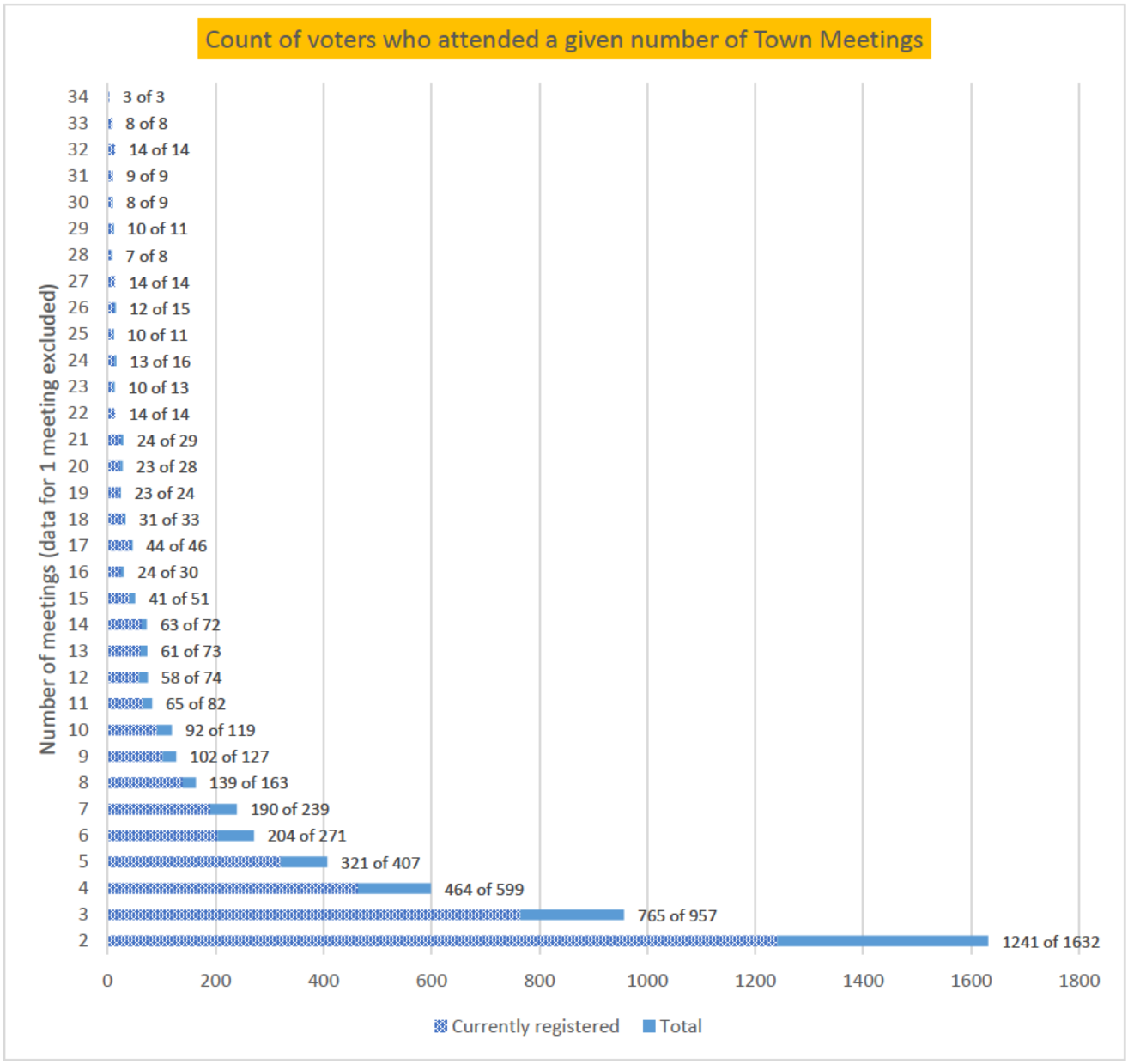


Figure 33 Count of voters who have attended a given number of Town Meetings

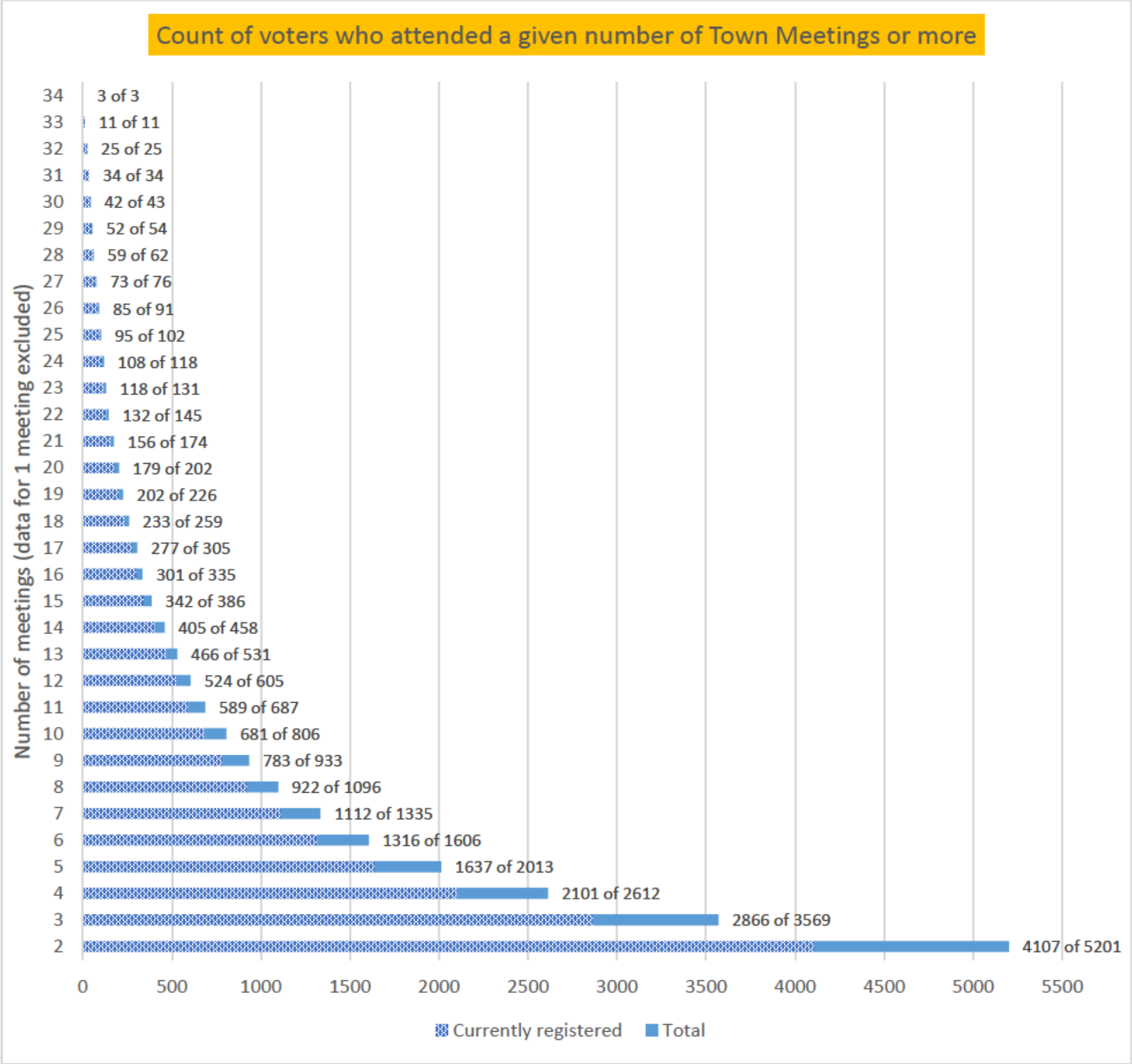


Figure 34 Count of voters who have attended a given number of Town Meetings or more

Figure 33 and Figure 34 show how many voters have attended a given number of meetings, and how many have attended a given number or more. For each row, two values are plotted, the number in total across all times of the period of 1998 to 2019, and the number of those who are still registered voters in Andover. The latter is perhaps a slightly better leading indicator of future attendance. One sees that 1637 residents who are still registered voters, or 2013 of all residents, have attended 5 or more Town Meetings; 681 residents who are still registered voters, or 806 of all residents, have attended 10 or more Town Meetings; and 179 residents who are still registered voters, or 202 of all residents, have attended 20 or more Town Meetings. One may conclude that a good proportion of attendees at any Town Meeting attendees are experienced, have seen how Town Meeting works and know the process, and attend irrespective of the issues to be discussed.

However, 2746 resident who are still registered voters or 3799 people who have been registered at some time during the study period have attended only 1 Town Meeting. These data are not shown on the graph so that the horizontal axis is not overly compressed. The Committee found these data somewhat troubling, and these data were an important factor in motivating the Committee to consider possible causes and to seek potential mitigations to better retain attendees.

Figure 35 and Figure 36 re-present the data, but in the context of attendance on each night of each Town Meeting. These Figures support the conclusions stated previously.

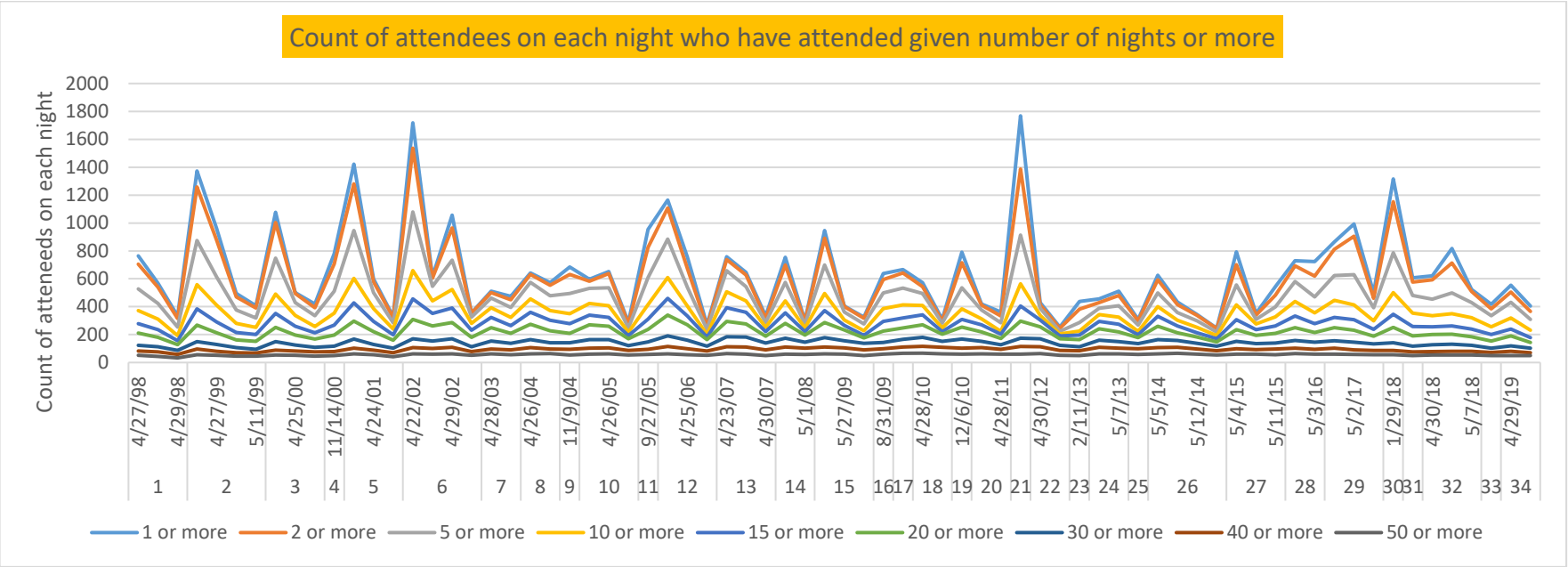


Figure 35 Count of attendees on each night of Town Meeting who have attended given number of nights or more

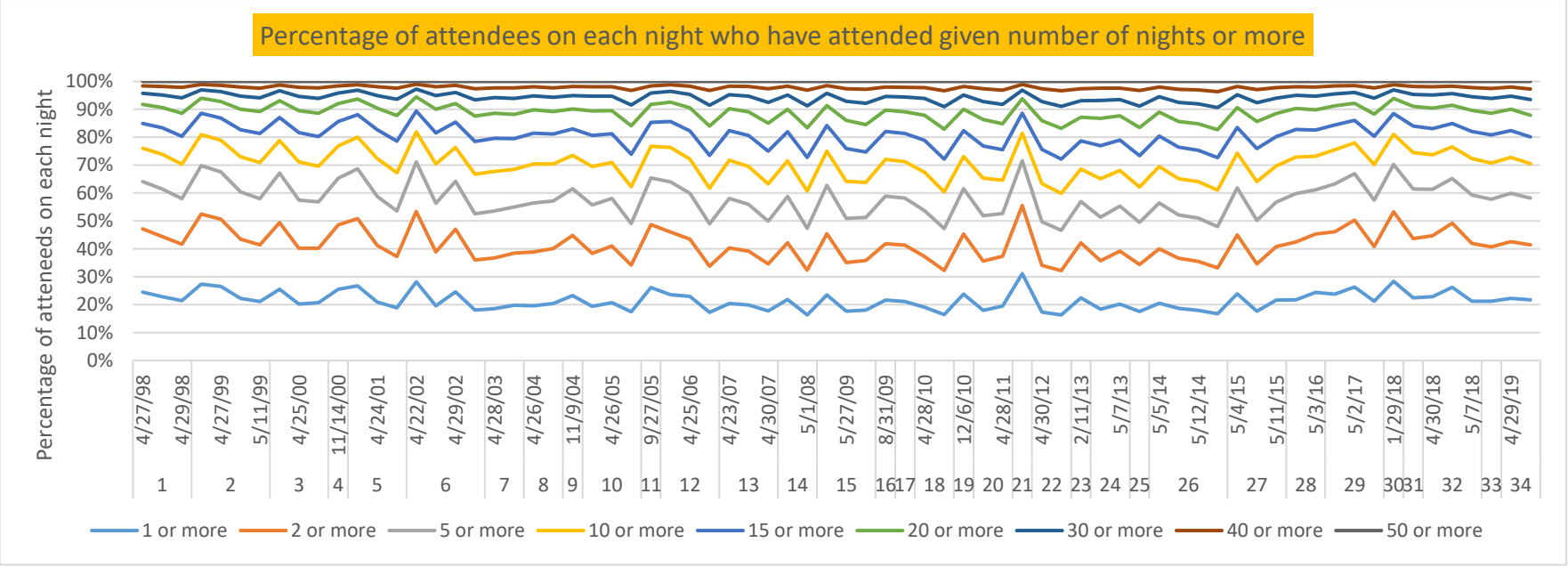


Figure 36 Percentage of attendees on each night of Town Meeting who have attended given number of nights or more

5. Town Meeting participation by locality

Figure 37 below breaks down attendance for every night of every Annual and Special Town Meeting since 1998, and shows the percentage of total attendees from each "locality." Locality" is used rather than "precinct" for this analysis because Andover's precincts are not all the same size. Had precincts been used, one would almost expect to see that more Town Meeting attendees come from some precincts than others. Instead, a more precise (and balanced) indicator of a voter's locality that is also included in the voter records was used. Precincts will be rebalanced in 2022 and this distinction will be rendered moot. It is readily apparent that the width of the stripes is generally similar between localities and night to night to night. One might argue that the light blue and orange bands towards the bottom of the chart are slightly broader than some others. This is because even though populations of localities are much better balanced than precincts, the number of voters are not perfectly equal. The important point is that these bands are consistently slightly broader. In fact, if there are any discrepancies, they are that some localities are less represented on occasion. That is, with few exceptions, residents do not turn out disproportionately for issues when either their locality stands to benefit most or would bear more heavily negative consequences from a matter being debated.

The Ballardvale Fire Station vote is an excellent example of this. There was strong opposition to this project from some residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed new fire station, and these residents did turn out to voice their opposition. However, the Town as a whole was in favor of the project and it was approved by a good margin.

Of course, representativeness can be judged on many criteria other than geographic balance of the legislature. Voter records do not provide sufficient data to analyze other criteria.

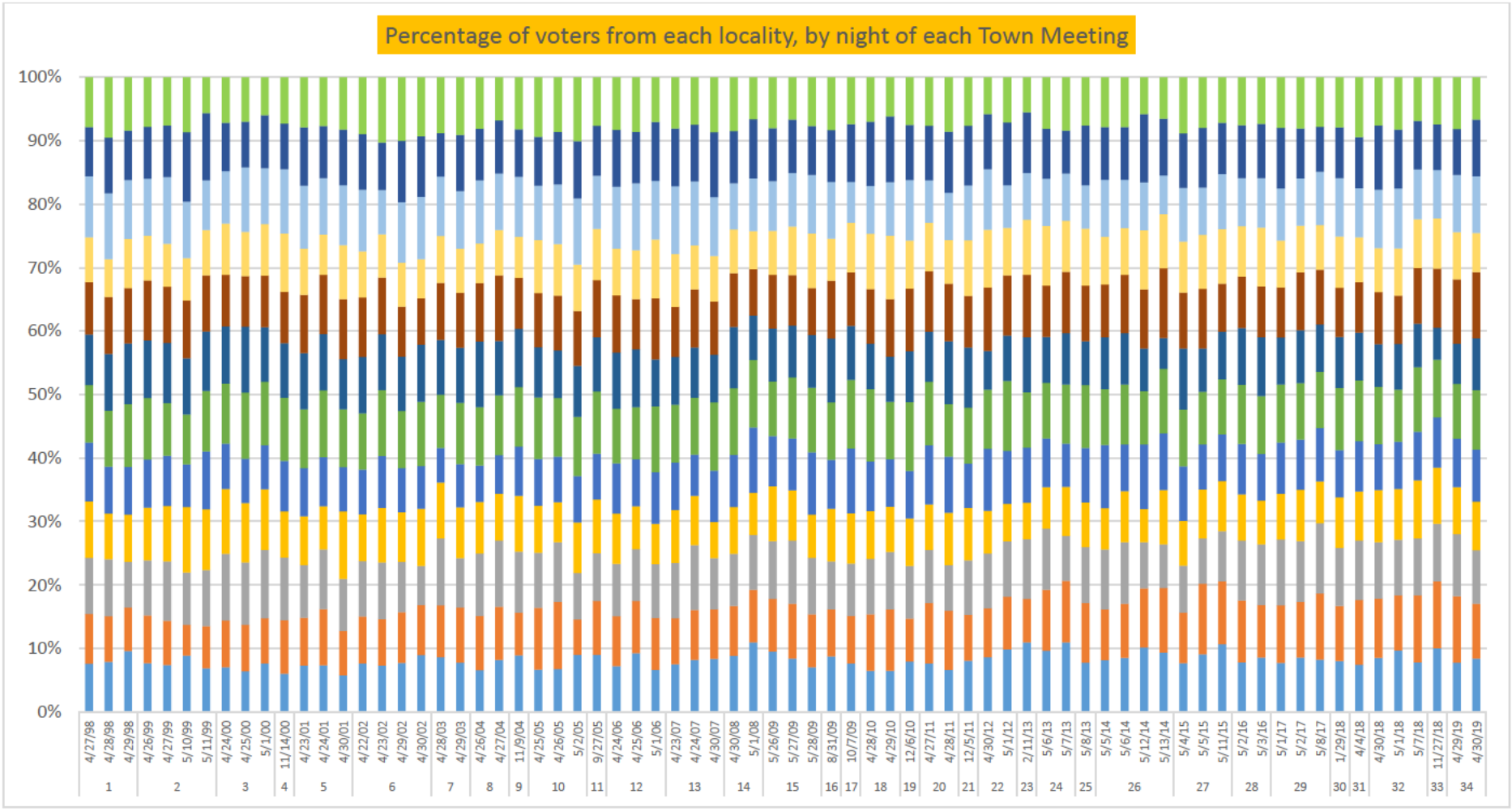


Figure 37 Percentage of attendees from each locality, by night of each Town Meeting

Main Findings and Conclusions

1. Data covered 1998 through 2019, with 21 Town Elections and 34 Town Meetings (Annual and Special).
2. 53864 individuals have been registered to vote in Andover in this period. 14856 (27.6%) have voted in one or more Town Elections. 9000 (16.7%) have attended one or more Town Meetings
3. Total attendance across all nights of each Town Meeting ranges from 500 (5% - 6% of electorate) to 2215 people (10.7%)
4. Attendance is high at Town Meetings (and even on nights) when "big ticket" Articles are considered, and falls to the 500 baseline if not. Taking this into consideration, attendance is stable year on year in both absolute numbers and proportion of registered voters
5. Those attending a Town Meeting have attended 5.1 Town Meetings on average. 800 individuals have attended 10 or more, which equates to about 250 highly experienced attendees at each meeting.
6. 3799 voters have only ever attended one Town Meeting.
7. The level of representation, as measured by turnout or attendance as the proportion of voters registered, has increased for Town Elections and been stable for Town Meetings as the number of voters registered in Andover has increased
8. All localities are equally represented at Town Meetings, meeting after meeting. Town Meeting is geographically representative. There is no evidence of parochial behavior

Appendix 6 – Video Recordings of Committee and Subcommittee Meetings

The following is a link to a central video archive, maintained by AndoverTV.org, of all recorded Committee and subcommittee meetings:

https://andovertv.org/town_governance

Appendix 7 – Community Paradigm Associates Report on Town Manager Residency Requirements

COMMUNITY
PARADIGM
ASSOCIATES, LLC

TOWN OF ANDOVER

Review of Residency Requirement

June 2021

There are few communities within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that maintain a residency requirement for its manager/administrator. The discussion of a requirement was more prevalent in the past during much different times.

There is no central registry to determine the actual number of communities that maintain residency, but it is estimated to be approximately a dozen, or less. Attached is an updated spreadsheet that was initially prepared for several communities as they reviewed their residency requirements. In fact, many communities that did have a requirement have eliminated it over the years. Both Hudson and Blackstone removed requirements within the past two months.

Some communities have a requirement that can be waived by vote of the Select Board and other communities have requirements that residency must be maintained in a certain region or by mileage. For example, the Town of Spencer states that their administrator must live within 15 miles of Spencer based on the border-to-border rule. The Town of Westborough has a requirement that their manager must live in town or a contiguous community.

Attached is an article that was published in the International City/County Managers Association's *PM Magazine* addressing residency requirements in general for department heads. One item worthy of consideration is the neutrality for a manager that does not live within the community. The argument can be made that there is a higher level of neutrality as that manager does not live on a particular street or section of town nor do they have family members involved in local schools or groups that may affect the way an individual perceives an issue.

Residency Not Required

	Notes
Acton	
Abington	
Adams	Residency within first year "unless otherwise provided by BOS
Amherst	Was waived by BOS via contract for at least 3 years
Arlington	
Ashburnham	
Ashland	
Auburn	Can be waived by 4/5 vote of BOS
Barnstable	within 6 mos but can be extended indefinitely
Bedford	
Bellingham	Residency but can be waived by BOS
Belmont	
Billerica	
Blackstone	Removed 2021
Bourne	
Boxborough	
Bridgewater	
Brewster	
Brookline	
Burlington	
Cambridge	
Canton	
Carlisle	
Carver	
Charlton	
Chatham	
Chelmsford	Residency, but can be waived byTown Council
Chelsea	
Cohasset	
Concord	
Conway	
Dartmouth	
Dedham	
Dennis	
Douglas	
Dover	
Dracut	
Dudley	
Duxbury	
East Bridgewater	
East Longmeadow	Residency, but can be waived byTown Council
Easton	Must be maintained within 30 miles
Falmouth	Residency, but can be waived by BOS
Foxborough	
Framingham	
Franklin	Residency, but can be waived byTown Council
Georgetown	

	Notes
Grafton	
Groton	
Great Barrington	Residency, but can be waived by BOS
Hadley	
Halifax	
Hamilton	
Hanover	
Harvard	
Hingham	
Holden	Can live in neighboring communities
Holliston	
Hopkinton	
Hudson	Removed 2021
Hull	
Ipswich	Can be waived by BOS for first contract
Kingston	
Lakeville	
Leicester	Must be maintained within 25 miles
Lexington	
Littleton	
Longmeadow	
Lowell	
Lunenburg	
Lynnfield	
Manchester By The Sea	
Marblehead	
Marshfield	
Maynard	
Medway	
Middleton	
Millis	
Natick	
Needham	
Norfolk	
North Andover	
North Attleborough	
Northbridge	
Northfield	
North Reading	
Oak Bluffs	
Orleans	
Palmer	
Pembroke	
Plainville	
Plymouth	
Princeton	
Randolph	

	Notes
Raynham	
Reading	
Rowe	
Salisbury	
Sandwich	Residency, but an be waived by unanimous vote of BOS
Saugus	
Scituate	
Sharon	
Sheffield	
Sherborn	
Shrewsbury	Can be waived by BOS...changed in 2016
Somerset	
Southampton	
Southborough	
South Hadley	
Spencer	Must be maintained within 15 miles
Stockbridge	
Stoneham	
Stoughton	
Sturbridge	
Sutton	
Swampscott	
Tewksbury	
Topsfield	
Townsend	
Tyngsborough	
Upton	
Uxbridge	
Wakefield	
Ware	
Wareham	
Watertown	Can be "excused" from requirement by Town Council
Wayland	
Wellfleet	
Wellesley	
Westborough	Must be maintained in a the Town or a contiguous town.
West Boylston	
West Bridgewater	
Westford	
Weston	
Westwood	
Wilmington	
Winchester	
Winthrop	
Wrentham	
Yarmouth	

Residency Required

	Notes
Andover	
Athol	
Danvers	
Lenox	Cannot find Charter--rely on 2016 survey. However, it should be noted that Town recently joined with Lee in sharing a TM

Mansfield	
Mashpee	
Northborough	
Oxford	
Provincetown	

Southwick	Cannot find Charter--rely on 2016 survey
Williamstown	
Worcester	

Residency Recommendations

Local Impacts of Employee Location

Nov 27, 2017 | PM MAGAZINE

By Steven Vinezeano, ICMA-CM



ICMA

As the manager of a relatively small local government of 30,000 residents, a request came to my office last year from an elected official to consider requiring all future department heads who are hired by the village to live within its boundaries.

Immediately my biases on the subject came to the surface. After 23 years, however, I have learned to never immediately shoot down an elected official's idea on any topic without thoroughly researching the matter and formulating a sound argument and recommendation.

As I began to study the topic, I found there was no one resource that provided information on local residency pros and cons. This article compiles the insight from numerous sources: general web-based news articles, ICMA website's "Ask & Answer," legal documents, and discussion with professional colleagues. (The Ask & Answer area of the website led me to more information at icma.org/questions/mandatory-residency-employees#node-84748).

Although my angle is from the point of view of department heads, much of the information gathered here could be expanded to include local government managers. It is my hope that this article will help others who are considering and researching the subject.

Arguments *for* Residency Laws

The debate on residency has its proponents on both sides. Here are the top reasons identified for having residency laws:

1.Residency ensures manpower will be available in case of an emergency. This argument is specific to a community's first responders, and it also can relate to public works employees. Since these departments are usually unionized, it is a mandatory subject of bargaining.

A case can be made, however, for department heads and higher-level positions who usually serve in emergency operations centers to be required to live in the community where they are employed.

But unless the event is immediate, widespread, and a complete surprise, it is my experience that this can be managed. Over the past nine years, I managed two blizzards, one multi-day power outage, and four floods, all of which were anticipated.

Although four of these incidents were declared disasters by the United States president and I lived outside of the community some 12 miles away, I managed to be present and on-site for each incident without putting myself in danger.

2. Residency promotes a better comprehension for problems within the community and an employee will take more interest in the results of their work. This argument is probably the most emotional of all arguments for residency groups.

Residents and elected officials have a lot of pride in their local government and in most cases, deep roots. There is a strong belief among some that unless a management-level employee lives in town, owns a home, uses the schools, and participates in community events, they could never really be committed to it.

To begin with, top-level personnel need to be professionals committed to doing their absolute best to improve the life of those served. An argument can be made, however, that these same staff need to be connected to the community and actively work to not be alienated.

A community connection comes from a number of things—volunteering alongside residents, participating in community clubs, attending community events, and generally being available to residents and other community organizations and agencies.

It has been my experience that department heads and other front-line employees who live outside the community often bring fresh ideas and operational programs with them from those communities.

3. Government confidence is increased when managed by residents. The argument for residency laws was not seen much in my research, but it certainly grabbed my attention. Confidence, in my opinion, is built through facetime with the public as well as the celebration of staff successes.

Depending on the form of government, it is possible that elected officials who are residents may be more engaged in local policy implementation, which is the case in the village where I currently serve.

A case can also be made against management and upper-level employees being residents due to the chance of being unduly pressured by neighbors, family members, and patronage to act unilaterally or to give special treatment, thus ultimately chancing a loss of trust in the position.

4. Residency promotes the "public coffer" principle, provides jobs to residents, encourages home ownership, and discourages middle-class flight. Certainly, local employees, especially those in unions, could be considered by some to be the last stronghold of the middle class. These employees will enhance local revenues through both real estate taxes and local economy participation.

Economies, however, do not exist in isolation. People shop where they want to shop or where they need to shop based on accessibility. Employees also can be encouraged to participate in the local economy through a shop-local campaign that encourages them to shop close to work.

Arguments *Against* Residency Laws

Here are the top reasons identified for not having residency laws:

1. Residency results in a less-skilled workforce. This argument against residency is likely the most commonly used by hiring professionals. A residency requirement could easily be that one issue that prevents a high-quality individual from entering a candidate pool.

The job offer must be good enough to overcome uprooting family, changing schools, accepting the quality of schools, overriding partner interests, moving costs, leaving aging parents, and so on.

If a position opening does not entice these candidates, a local government is left with the potential of a lower-skilled workforce, which will negatively impact the quality of work.

2. Residency requires a generous compensation package to attract the best and brightest to work for a local government. To overcome the pressures mentioned above, including underwater mortgages and a depressed housing market, a residency law would require a generous compensation package.

A compensation package that includes such benefits as moving and housing assistance, an above-average salary, an auto allowance, and an employment contract with generous separation terms among other items.

Unless the locality is willing to settle on a candidate who is less experienced or less qualified, a residency policy could become a long-term financial liability.

3. Residency reduces the liberty of the employee. Fundamentally, residency rules squeeze the rights of an employee by telling them where to buy a home, send their kids to school, raise a family, and spend their free time.

Quality of life is relative. While some may enjoy living in an urban setting, others may prefer suburban or country living. Forcing residency can easily have a negative impact on the work-life balance of an employee and his or her family members. This level of control could easily impact morale and quality of life resulting in resentment and ultimately, turnover.

My ultimate advice for local governments deciding to pursue residency laws for upper-level staff positions is to be mindful of the challenges they will face with attracting and retaining quality leaders and managers.

It is my experience that department heads and management personnel are career-driven professionals who are going to give any community they serve 110 percent. They will become connected to the community, no matter where they lay their heads at night.

Steven Vinezeano, ICMA-CM, is village manager, Niles, Illinois (scv@vniles.com).

Advertisement

Appendix 8 – Preliminary Study of Applicability of Ranked-choice Voting in Andover

1. Introduction

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) has started to be used in local, state and federal elections in the USA. While it is only used infrequently at this time, it does constitute a potential change to the status quo. It is incumbent upon the TGSC to study whether to recommend that Andover adopts RCV. A full study would be time-consuming and complex. It would make sense to study the simplest questions first. One of these is whether there is evidence that RCV might affect the outcomes of Andover's local elections (or alternatively, evidence that it probably would not affect the outcomes).

From the data, there is some evidence that the conditions in some elections in Andover might have been such that RCV might have affected their outcomes. It is left to the reader to determine whether it would have been realistically likely that the outcomes would have been affected (data are presented in this paper that might be helpful in this consideration), and whether there were enough of these elections to justify deeper consideration of RCV.

2. Methodology

The results of all local elections since 2008 are available on the Town web site and these have been used as the sample. Select Board and School Committee elections in each year were analyzed.

In 2011, there were two separate votes for Select Board on the ballot, one to elect a member for one year (hereafter "2001a") and one to elect a member for two years (hereafter "2011b"). The candidates for each were independent, so these two ballots have been treated as two elections. Thus, in total, 15 Select Board elections and 14 School Committee elections were analyzed.

The results of each of these 29 elections were then analyzed to determine:

- How many candidates stood for the election and how many votes did each receive (in ranked order)? This throws some light onto whether some assumptions that underlie these analyses are valid.
- Were there sufficient candidates in that election to support RCV? This informs the most basic question - do enough of Andover's elections have sufficient candidates for us to even consider RCV?
- Is it mathematically possible that RCV might have changed the outcome of that election? This is a simple pre-screening test to determine whether additional, more in-depth, analysis should be applied to that election.
- By what margin was that election won in comparison to how many votes were left uncast (votes recorded as "blanks")? Larger numbers of uncast votes possibly weakens the case for RCV.

- Is it realistic to believe that enough votes might be transferred to a candidate who initially did not win so he/she could have overtaken a candidate who was initially a leader? RCV is only worth considering if it realistically might affect the outcome of elections.

3. Results

a) Raw Data

	Year	# seats	Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3	Candidate 4	Candidate 5	Blanks
Select Board	2021	2	1108	1026	5			308
	2020	1	1798	726				108
	2019	2	2733	2230	1743	395		1266
	2018	2	3084	2738	1897	682		1055
	2017	1	1987	1793				40
	2016	2	2593	2524	2511			1531
	2015	2	1857	1840	1624	601		1009
	2014	1	941	309				24
	2013	2	844	647	305			311
	2012	2	1181	1145	461	330	293	461
	2011(a)	1	1455					544
	2011(b)	1	935	711	260			110
	2010	2	1155	972	652			487
	2009	2	2003	1855	1378			1062
	2008	1	1446	1188				134
School Committee	2021	2	1054	1043	9			324
	2020	1	1356	854	374			49
	2019	2	2630	2246	1408	699		1372
	2018	2	2993	2615	1983			1865
	2017	1	2113	1658				48
	2016	2	2341	2208	1828	1524		1253
	2015	2	2409	706				348
	2014	1	895					371
	2013	2	749	658				693
	2012	2	1416	1282	5			1377
	2011	1	1035	912				72
	2010	2	1087	960				1209
	2009	2	1755	1482	1143	592	351	981
	2008	1	1292	1069				400

Write-in votes were only recorded in the 2021 elections, and the number of write-in votes in these elections was so small as to be inconsequential (5 and 9 votes respectively). Write-in votes have not been treated specially in any analysis.

For these analyses, it is assumed that RCV would neither have stimulated additional candidates to stand nor discouraged any of those candidates who did stand. The data show that a number of elections were tightly contested. This might indicate that candidates will stand in local elections in Andover without considering whether there is a risk of splitting the vote, which supports the assumption. The data do match the informal observation that there has not been evidence of coordination between multiple candidates in the same election, which might have led to tactical campaigning. The data also show that in some cases, some candidates poll significantly poorer than the leaders, which might suggest that residents already stand undeterred by the strength of the field. Again, this would support the assumption. However, we return to these assumptions in the more detailed analyses later.

b) RCV Theoretical Feasibility

	Year	# seats	Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3	Candidate 4	Candidate 5	Feasible?
Select Board	2021	2	1108	1026	5			
	2020	1	1798	726				
	2019	2	2733	2230	1743	395		✓
	2018	2	3084	2738	1897	682		✓
	2017	1	1987	1793				
	2016	2	2593	2524	2511			
	2015	2	1857	1840	1624	601		✓✓
	2014	1	941	309				
	2013	2	844	647	305			
	2012	2	1181	1145	461	330	293	✓
	2011(a)	1	1455					
	2011(b)	1	935	711	260			✓✓
	2010	2	1155	972	652			
	2009	2	2003	1855	1378			
	2008	1	1446	1188				
School Committee	2021	2	1054	1043	9			
	2020	1	1356	854	374			✓
	2019	2	2630	2246	1408	699		✓
	2018	2	2993	2615	1983			
	2017	1	2113	1658				
	2016	2	2341	2208	1828	1524		✓✓
	2015	2	2409	706				
	2014	1	895					
	2013	2	749	658				

	2012	2	1416	1282	5			
	2011	1	1035	912				
	2010	2	1087	960				
	2009	2	1755	1482	1143	592	351	✓✓
	2008	1	1292	1069				

If the election was for one seat, there would need to be at least three candidates to support RCV; if for two seats, there must need to be at least four candidates[i]. Rows marked with a single check mark represent elections in which there were sufficient candidates to support RCV, amounting to 9 of the 29 elections. Rows marked with a double check mark represent elections in which there were sufficient candidates to support RCV and in which it would have been *mathematically* feasible for RCV to lead to a different outcome, amounting to 4 of the 29 elections. To test for *mathematical* feasibility, we assume that all votes received by all but one of the losers would be transferred to the other losing candidate. If anything, this will lead to false positives, but suffices as an initial pre-screening test to identify which elections should be studied in more depth to assess whether it is realistic to believe that RCV could have affected the outcome[ii].

c) Margins and Blanks

	Year	# seats	Lowest winner	Highest loser	Margin	Percent margin	Blanks	Blanks > margin	Feasible?
Select Board	2021	2	1026	5	1021	99.5%	308		
	2020	1	1798	726	1072	59.6%	108		
	2019	2	2230	1743	487	21.8%	1266	✓	✓
	2018	2	2738	1897	841	30.7%	1055	✓	✓
	2017	1	1987	1793	194	9.8%	40		
	2016	2	2524	2511	13	0.5%	1531	✓	
	2015	2	1840	1624	216	11.7%	1009	✓	✓✓
	2014	1	941	309	632	67.2%	24		
	2013	2	647	305	342	52.9%	311	✓	
	2012	2	1145	461	684	59.7%	461		✓
	2011(a)	1	1455	0	1455	100.0%	544		
	2011(b)	1	935	711	224	24.0%	110		✓✓
	2010	2	972	652	320	32.9%	487	✓	
	2009	2	1855	1378	477	25.7%	1062	✓	
	2008	1	1446	1188	258	17.8%	134		
School	2021	2	1043	9	1034	99.1%	324		
	2020	1	1356	854	502	37.0%	49		✓
	2019	2	2246	1408	838	37.3%	1372	✓	✓
	2018	2	2615	1983	632	24.2%	1865	✓	
	2017	1	2113	1658	455	21.5%	48		

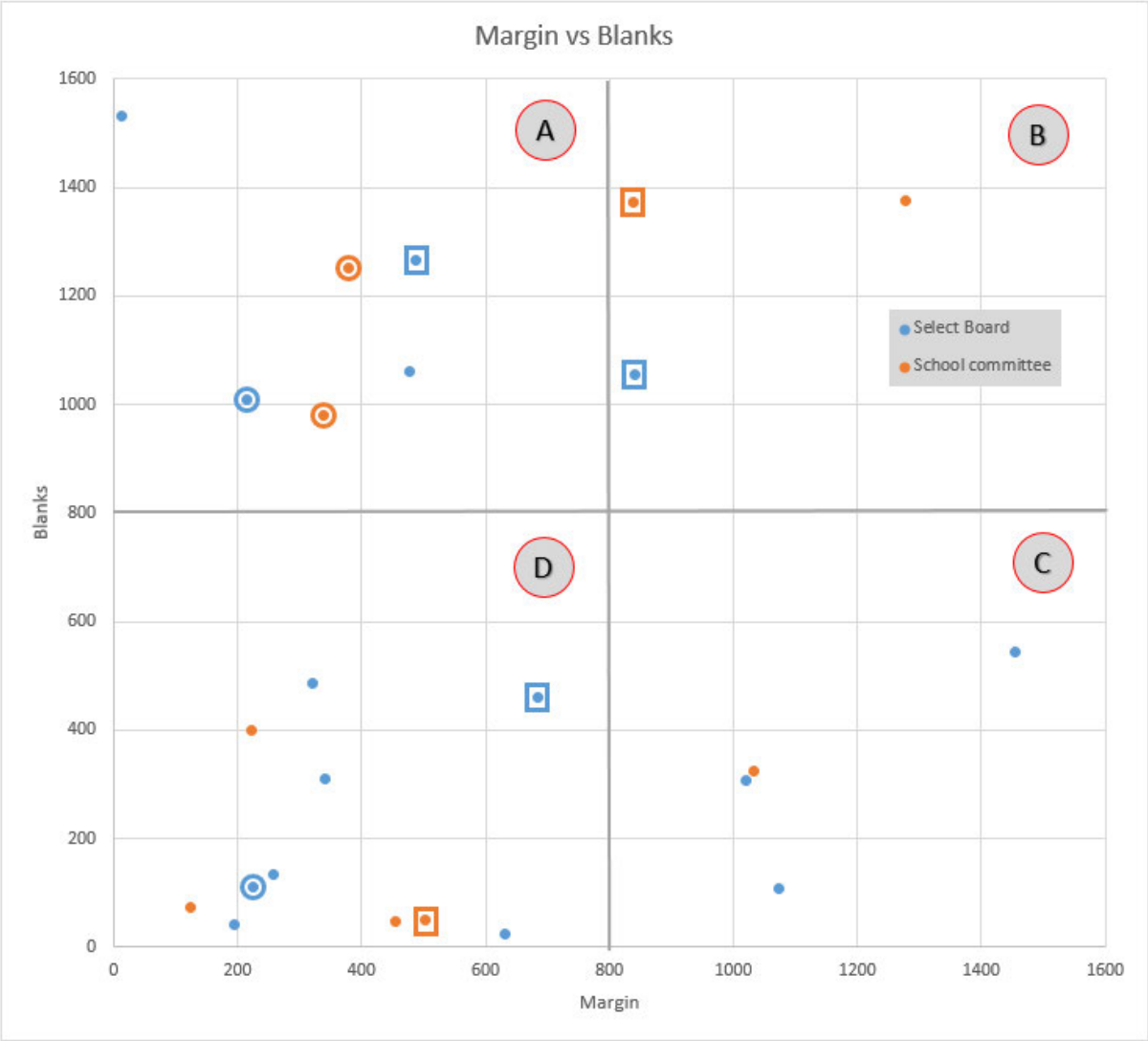
	2016	2	2208	1828	380	17.2%	1253	✓	✓✓
	2015	2	706				348		
	2014	1	895				371		
	2013	2	658				693		
	2012	2	1282	5	1277	99.6%	1377	✓	
	2011	1	1035	912	123	11.9%	72		
	2010	2	960				1209		
	2009	2	1482	1143	339	22.9%	981	✓	✓✓
	2008	1	1292	1069	223	17.3%	400	✓	

- "Margin" represents the margin or difference between the number of votes received by the winning candidate (if one seat were being elected) or the lower-ranked winning candidate (if two seats were being elected) and the number of votes received by the highest-ranked losing candidate.
- "Percent margin" expresses the margin as a percentage of the votes received by the (lower-ranked) winning candidate.
- "Blanks" shows the number of votes that were left uncast in that election (votes recorded as "blanks")

Margins ranged from 0.5% to 95%. In some elections, large numbers of votes were left uncast (thousands). The number of blanks exceeded the margin in 13 of the 29 elections. In three of the four elections in which it was *mathematically* feasible for RCV to lead to a different outcome, the number of blanks exceeded the margin. That is, in these elections, even if all blank votes had been cast for the highest-ranked loser instead, the highest-ranked loser would not have won.

As an aside, studies have shown that turnout for local (typically mayoral) elections increases by up to 10% in municipalities that use RCV. The large number of voters who turn out then don't vote in Andover render this benefit moot.

Additional insights might be gained by plotting the margin against the number of blank votes for each election, as shown below. Elections in which there were only enough candidates to fill the seats are not shown. Elections that included sufficient candidates for RCV are highlighted with squares; those in which it was also mathematically feasible that RCV to lead to a different outcome are highlighted with circles.



The chart has been divided into four quadrants. Each quadrant represents a particular combination of high or low margin and high or low number of blanks. One might postulate that each combination arises from different levels of how strongly candidates were differentiated and how strongly were voters motivated. Then, for each combination of differentiation and motivation, one might postulate whether or not RCV might have made a difference to the elections in that quadrant had it been in use. Finally, one might argue that quadrant D represents the only combination of differentiation and motivation in which RCV might make a difference[iii].

If the reader accepts this hypothesis is valid, then one would conclude that 9 of the 29 elections had the right combination of differentiation and motivation for RCV to potentially make a difference to the outcome[iv]. Of these, three had sufficient candidates, and it was *mathematically* feasible in one for RCV to lead to a different outcome.

d) Plausibility

The pre-screening test described in section 3(a) only establishes whether it would have been mathematically possible for RCV to change the outcome of an election. The test does not assess whether it is plausible that votes would have been transferred in a way that would actually effect change. This section considers whether a lower-placed candidate might realistically have been able to overtake a leader if RCV were in use, or whether he/she would have faced a "hill too steep to climb". RCV is only worth considering if it realistically might affect the outcome of elections.

The pre-screening test assumes that all transferrable votes were transferred to one of the initial losers. Here, we refine that assumption and determine what proportion of the transferrable votes would need to be transferred to an initial loser so that he/she would overtake the winner (in an election for one seat) or the winner with the lower initial number of votes (in an election for two seats). Of course, votes that are not transferred to an initial loser might be transferred to (one of) the initial winner(s), thus increasing the number of votes that would need to be transferred to the initial loser for him/her to overtake[v]. So, the number of votes that the initial loser would require has been calculated for scenarios ranging from the most favorable (no remaining votes are transferred to the lower loser) to the least favorable (all remaining votes are transferred to the lower loser). Note therefore that the percentage of votes needed by the loser is the percentage of the <u>total</u> transferrable votes (which is the metric to establish feasibility), whereas the percentage of votes transferred to the lowest winner is the percentage of the <u>remaining</u> votes transferred to one or other of the winners (i.e., after those transferred to the loser have been allocated).

Lowest winner receives:	**Select Board 2015**	**School C'ttee 2016**	**Select Board 2011b**	**School C'ttee 2009**
0% of remaining votes	36%	25%	93%	36%
20% of remaining votes	56%	45%		56%
40% of remaining votes	76%	65%		76%
60% of remaining votes	96%	85%		96%
80% of remaining votes	116%	105%		116%
100% of remaining votes	136%	125%		136%

The number of votes that would need to be transferred to an initial loser equates to the magnitude of the challenge he/she would face. If the loser would need a large proportion of the transferrable votes, it is probably reasonable to conclude that it is simply numerically/probabilistically unlikely that the deficit could be overcome. Of course, it is left for the reader to decide the threshold for this. However, this analysis does not consider whether

votes would actually be transferred in the way that would be required, that is, how and whether voters might have set second and subsequent choices. Here, a consideration of the personal and policy characteristics of the individual candidates might be helpful. To that end, we list the candidates in each of the elections in which it was *mathematically* feasible for RCV to lead to a different outcome. Each candidate's performance in previous and subsequent elections is also noted, as that might indicate whether the candidate was consistently highly or poorly regarded by voters and/or whether he/she won or lost as one amongst many strong candidates. The characteristics of the individual candidates might be considered in conjunction with the characterization of the various quadrants as discussed previously.

2016 School Committee (2 seats)	SHANNON I. SCULLY	2341	Elected 2016 (2341 votes, first), elected 2019 (2630 votes, first)
	PAUL D. MURPHY	2208	Elected 2016 (2208 votes, second), elected 2019 (2246 votes, second)
	BOB POKRESS	1828	Defeated 2016 (1828 votes, third), defeated 2017 (1658 votes, second)
	BILL PERKINS	1524	Defeated 2016 (1524 votes, fourth)
2015 Select Board (2 seats)	DANIEL H. KOWALSKI	1857	Elected 2012 (1145 votes, narrow second), elected 2015 (1857 votes, first)
	ROBERT A. LANDRY	1840	Elected 2015 (1849 votes, narrow second), defeated 2018 (682 votes, last)
	BRIAN P. MAJOR	1624	Elected 2009 (2003 votes, first), elected 2012 (1181 votes, first), defeated 2015 (1624 votes, third)
	NEIL J. SENIOR	601	Defeated 2015 (601 votes, last)
2011b Select Board (1 seat)	PAUL J. SALAFIA	935	Elected 2011 (935 votes, first), elected 2013 (647 votes, second), elected 2016 (2593 votes, first)
	DANIEL H. KOWALSKI	711	Defeated 2011, elected 2012 (1145 votes, narrow second), elected 2015 (1857 votes, first)
	LARRY BRUCE	260	Defeated 2011 (260 votes, last), defeated 2013 (305 votes, last)
2009 School Committee (2 seats)	ANN W GILBERT	1755	Elected 2009 (1755 votes, first), elected 2012 (1416 votes, first)
	ARTHUR H BARBER	1143	Elected 2009 (1143 votes, second)
	PAULA COLBY-CLEMENT	592	Defeated 2009 (592 votes, third), elected 2010 (1087 votes, first), elected 2013 (749 votes, first)

	DAVID A BIRNBACH	482	Defeated 2009 (482 votes, fourth), elected 2012 (1282 votes, second), defeated 2015 (1198 votes, fourth)
	DIANE M MCCARRON	351	Defeated 2009 (351 votes, fifth)

Notes

[1] Unless there was at least one candidate in an election for one seat, or two candidates in an election for two seats, the initial votes would not even fill all available seats. Unless there was another candidate, there would be no-one *to whom* votes could be transferred to escalate him/her to overtake on of the initial leaders. Finally, unless there was at least one more candidate, there would be no-one *from whom* votes could be transferred.

[2] For the elections in which there were sufficient candidates, it is mathematically possible that RCV might have changed the outcome if the total number of votes received by all losing candidates is greater than the votes received by the (lower) winning candidate. To make the explanation clearer, assume the election is for one seat. Assume for now that all votes received by all of the losers are transferred to other candidates who initially lost, that is, that the initial leader does not gain any benefit from RCV. One of the initially losing candidates would receive in total the number of votes initially cast for him/her, plus all the votes initially cast for the other losing candidates, which of course is equal to the total number of votes cast for all losers. This candidate could mathematically overtake the winning candidate if this sum is greater than the number of votes cast for the winner. The same rationale applies to an election for two seats, where the loser could overtake the lower of the winning candidates if this sum is greater than the number of votes cast for the lower winning candidate. For this analysis, it is moot which of the initial losers might ultimately overtake the winner, we just need to know that one candidate could do so. Thus, the simple arithmetic outlined above suffices; we do not need to simulate the order in which losing candidates are eliminated.

[3] Quadrants A and B comprise elections in which large numbers of blank votes were recorded. Superficially, this might suggest that the extra complexity of RCV would not have been warranted in these elections given that many voters often do not cast a vote at all. (Note however that one might consider the significance of the number of voters who turned out but did not cast a vote against the number who did not turn out at all). However, a more detailed consideration might lead to a different conclusion.

One might postulate that quadrant A comprises elections in which each of the higher-ranked candidates (winners and higher-ranked losers) were less differentiated (low margins). If so, voters who did vote would be more likely to cast their votes in roughly equal proportion, while many voters might not feel moved to vote for any specific candidate as they would be satisfied with any outcome (high number of blanks). If RCV were in use, voters' choices of second- and subsequent-choice votes might perhaps be somewhat arbitrary choices (if recorded at all). If it were difficult to differentiate first choice candidates, it would be more difficult to choose second- and subsequent-choice candidates. Given that margins were small in the elections in this quadrant, one might argue that the increased resolution offered by RCV might be warranted. Conversely, the large number of blanks might suggest that RCV would only have a second-order effect and the most assured route to a win would be for a candidate to differentiate themselves better. In any case, if the candidates are less differentiated, one might argue that the election has

less impact on the quality of government - whoever is elected would perform similarly. This is no consolation at a personal level to a losing candidate who comes close to a win, of course.

Conversely, quadrant B might comprise the elections is which candidates were well differentiated and many voters had strong preferences for the winner(s). Candidates might be differentiated because of significant differences in the merit of their policies or because voters had an inherent dislike for the loser's platform (for example, if the loser were standing as a disruptive agents of change). At the same time, voters might not vote because they would be satisfied with an outcome that they perceived to be inevitable (in other words, they left it to other voters to elect the candidate that they also preferred). Conversely, voters might not bother to vote because they did not see their preferred candidate having any chance. In either case, RCV would be unlikely to affect the outcome, as voters would not be motivated to their choices of second- and subsequent-choices.

One might postulate that quadrant C comprises elections in which the winning candidates were highly differentiated from the other candidates (the high margin) and in which voters were strongly motivated to vote (low number of blanks). Candidates might be differentiated as previously described for quadrant B. However, unlike quadrant B, the merits of the winning candidate(s) platform might be so appealing that everyone was motivated to vote, or voters might be strongly opposed to the loser's platform or perceive it to be a threat and actively vote against that candidate. In either case, if RCV were in use, voters might transfer votes between the winning candidates in a two-seat contest, or maybe between losing candidates in the unlikely case that there was more than one candidate with the same, unpopular platform, but this would not affect the outcome.

Finally, quadrant D might comprise the elections in which RCV might affect the outcome. The low margins would suggest that the election was tightly contested and the small numbers of blanks would suggest that voters were motivated. In a tightly contested race, a plurality win is least likely to represent the majority's wishes, so RCV would be most relevant. Highly motivated voters are most likely to be motivated to record their choices of second- and subsequent-choices so RCV would have the "raw materials" to function.

[4] A reader might believe that the boundaries between the quadrants should be adjusted. The boundaries were plotted at 50% of the ranges to be as neutral as possible. Notwithstanding, the real question is whether the reader agrees qualitatively with the above assessment.

[5] This assumes that all ballots would have second and third choices. This is not necessarily valid, as discussed for quadrants A and B in Note 3.

Appendix 9 – Community Paradigm Associates Report on Elected Official Recall Mechanisms

COMMUNITY
PARADIGM
ASSOCIATES, LLC

TOWN OF ANDOVER

Review of Recall Provisions

June 2021

COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

We are providing the following information on recall provisions as requested by the Town Governance Study Committee. Recall provisions do tend to be similar in nature. For review purposes, we have included the two recall provisions that are currently before the Legislature from the Towns of Wenham and Otis. We have also included the recall provisions for Andover's border communities that have adopted them which include North Andover, Wilmington, Tewksbury, North Reading, and Dracut.

In addition, the following is a list of recall elections that have occurred since 2019 in Massachusetts as published by Ballotpedia on their website,

https://ballotpedia.org/Recall_campaigns_in_Massachusetts

Massachusetts Recall Elections

2021

- Dan Freitas recall, Fairhaven, Massachusetts (2021)

2020

- Kelly Cobb-Lemire recall, Braintree School Department, Massachusetts (2020)
- Select board recall, Kingston, Massachusetts (2020)
- Vanessa Alvarado recall, Reading, Massachusetts (2020)
- Westford School Department recall, Massachusetts (2020)

2019

- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe recall, Massachusetts (2019)
- Verne Sund recall, Greenfield, Massachusetts (2019)
- Jasiel Correia recall, Fall River, Massachusetts (2019)

2018

- William Kingkade recall, Milford, Massachusetts (2018)
- Jasiel Correia recall, Fall River, Massachusetts (2019)
- Nancy Goulart recall, Dighton, Massachusetts (2018)
- Edward Kimball recall, Rockland, Massachusetts (2018)
- James Burgess recall, Randolph, Massachusetts (2018)

2017

- Town board recall, Stoughton, Massachusetts (2017)
- Shannon Cutler recall, Southampton, Massachusetts (2017)
- Teresa Barrett recall, West Brookfield, Massachusetts (2017)
- Gordy Clark and Cindy King recall, Townsend, Massachusetts (2017)
- Kendra Dumont and Robert Prescott recall, Shirley, Massachusetts (2017)

2016

- Kendra Dumont and Robert Prescott recall, Shirley, Massachusetts (2017)
- Judith Marguiles recall, Ashland, Massachusetts (2016)
- Richard Jankauskas recall, Barre, Massachusetts (2016)
- Scott McGee recall, Mashpee School Department, Massachusetts (2016)
- Gordy Clark and Carolyn Smart recall, Townsend, Massachusetts (2016)
- Tim Toomey recall, Rowley, Massachusetts (2016)
- Dan Rivera recall, Lawrence, Massachusetts (2016)

2015

- Cindy Bohne and Chris Linskey recall, Winchester School Department, Massachusetts (2015)
- Gordy Clark and Carolyn Smart recall, Townsend, Massachusetts (2016)
- Tim Toomey recall, Rowley, Massachusetts (2016)
- Dan Rivera recall, Lawrence, Massachusetts (2016)
- Dana Manning recall, Holland Board of Health, Hampden County, Massachusetts (2015)
- Cathy Richardson recall, Dracut, Massachusetts (2015)
- Bonnie Conner recall, Hinsdale, Massachusetts (2015)
- Fedor Berndt and Beth Hunt recall, Winchendon, Massachusetts (2015)

2014

- Steve Ingerson recall, Ashby, Massachusetts (2014)
- Saugus Selectmen recall, Massachusetts (2014)
- Will Flanagan recall, Fall River, Massachusetts (2014)
- James Egan and Stephen Amico recall, Hanson, Massachusetts recall (2014)
- John Morrissey and Berta Bruinooge recall, Wellfleet, Massachusetts (2014)
- Austin Knight recall, Provincetown, Massachusetts (2014)
- Jean Syria and Susan Smiley recall, Lancaster, Massachusetts (2014)

2012

- Julie Farrell and Robert Mitchell recall, Templeton, Massachusetts (2012)
- Will Flanagan recall, Fall River, Massachusetts (2012)

2011

- Donald Cykowski recall, Easthampton, Massachusetts (2012)
- Board of Selectmen recall, Chelmsford, Massachusetts (2011)
- Mike Demos, Peter Riordan, and Mike Berolini recall, Bridgewater, Massachusetts (2012)
- William Lantigua recall, Lawrence, Massachusetts (2011)
- Kenneth Elstein, George Archible and James Barry recall, Belchertown, Massachusetts (2011)

2010

- Robert S. Filipkowski recall, North Brookfield, Massachusetts (2010)
- Robert R. Nichols recall, Blandford, Massachusetts (2010)
- Melissa Freitag recall, Falmouth, Massachusetts, 2010

2009

- Wareham Board of Selectmen recall, Massachusetts 2009

COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

Bills Filed This Year

WENHAM – H 3746

SECTION 1. Any holder of an office elected solely by the voters of Wenham may be recalled and removed therefrom by the qualified voters of said town as herein provided.

SECTION 2. No fewer than 50 registered voters of Wenham may initiate recall by filing with the town clerk an affidavit of intent to recall, signed under the penalties of perjury, containing the name of the officer and the office held whose recall is sought and a statement of the grounds of recall; provided however, that the vote of an elected official on a matter, other than in connection with a conflict-of-interest violation, shall not constitute valid grounds for recall; the voters themselves shall individually determine whether any other grounds listed for recall are sufficient. The town clerk shall, within 2 business days of receipt of an affidavit of intent, certify, in accordance with the standards established by section 7 of chapter 53 of the General Laws, the names of voters of the town who signed the affidavit of intent.

SECTION 3. Upon certification by the town clerk of a sufficient number of signatures, the town clerk shall, within 3 business days, notify the primary petitioner, the voter first named on such notice of intent, that copies of such petition blanks are available at the office of the town clerk. The blanks shall be issued by the town clerk with the town clerk's signature and official seal attached thereto; they shall be dated and addressed to the select board/board of selectmen and shall contain the name of the person whose recall is sought, the office from which recall is sought, the grounds for recall as stated in the affidavit, and shall demand the election of a successor to such office. The names of the first ten signers of the affidavit of intent shall be listed above the voter signature lines and any instructions to signers. A copy of the petition shall be entered in a record book to be kept in the office of the town clerk.

SECTION 4. The recall petition shall be returned and filed with the town clerk and board of registrars no later than 5:00 p.m. 21 calendar days following the date the clerk notifies the primary petitioner of the availability of the petition, or the next business day if the 21st day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. The clerk shall notify the primary petitioner of the final date and hour for filing. Said recall petition shall be signed by at least 10 percent of the registered voters of Wenham as of the last annual town election, and to every signature shall be added the place of residence of the signer, giving the street and number. The town clerk and board of registrars shall, within 5 business days following the date of such filing, certify in writing thereon the number of signatures which are names of registered voters in said town as of the date such affidavit was filed with the town clerk.

SECTION 5. If the petition shall be found and certified by said town clerk to be sufficient, the town clerk shall submit the certified petition to said select board/board of selectmen within 2 business days from certification of sufficient signatures and said select board/board of selectmen shall forthwith, and in no more than 5 business days, give written notice of the receipt of said certificate to said elected officer whose recall is being sought. If the officer sought to be removed does not resign within 3 business days thereafter, said select board/board of selectmen shall within 5 business days order a recall election to be held not less than 64 nor more than 90 calendar days from the date of the vote scheduling the election; provided however, that if any other town election is to occur within 100 calendar days after the date of the vote, the select board/board of selectmen may, in its discretion, place the question of recall on the ballot at such other election. If a vacancy occurs in said office after a recall election has been ordered, but not yet been conducted, the election shall nevertheless proceed as herein provided.

SECTION 6. The nomination of all candidates, including the incumbent, the publication of the warrant for the recall election, and the conduct of the same, shall all be in accordance with the provisions of law relating to elections, unless otherwise provided in this act.

SECTION 7. The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of the office until the recall election unless the elected official resigns. If the incumbent is not recalled that person shall remain in office for the remainder of the incumbent's unexpired term, subject to recall as before. If recalled in the recall election, the incumbent shall be considered removed. The successor, upon qualification, shall hold office during the unexpired term; provided, however, that if such person is not qualified within 10 business days of said election, the position shall be deemed vacant and may be filled in accordance with applicable law.

SECTION 8. Ballots used in a recall election in said town shall submit the following proposition in the order indicated:

FOR THE RECALL OF THE [NAME OF OFFICER] (OFFICE HELD)

AGAINST THE RECALL OF THE [NAME OF OFFICER] (OFFICE HELD)

Immediately at the right of each proposition there shall be a designated space for voters to vote for either of the propositions. Just above said space, there shall appear the direction "Vote for one".

Under the proposition shall appear the word "CANDIDATES" and the direction "Vote for one" and

beneath this, listed alphabetically, the names of candidates nominated as hereinbefore provided.

If a majority of the votes cast on the recall question is in favor of the recall, the elected official shall be recalled and the ballots for the candidates shall be counted. The candidate who received the highest number of votes of the special election to the vacancy shall be elected.

If a majority of the votes cast on the recall question is in the negative, the votes for candidates to fill the potential vacancy need not be counted unless a vacancy exists at the time of the election.

SECTION 9. A recall petition shall not be filed against an elected official within three months after the official has taken office. An elected official shall not be subject to a subsequent recall effort for the same specific grounds listed in the notice of intent filed for any prior recall effort.

A person who has been recalled from office, or who has resigned from office after the recall petition has been filed with the board of registrars of voters, shall not be appointed to any town office, board or committee within 3 years after the recall or resignation.

SECTION 10. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

OTIS - H 826

SECTION 1. Any holder of elective office in the Town of Otis may be recalled by the registered voters of Otis as herein provided.

SECTION 2. Any one hundred (100) registered voters of the Town may file an affidavit with the Town Clerk containing the name of the officer sought to be recalled and a statement of the grounds for the recall. The Town Clerk shall thereupon deliver to said voters a sufficient number of copies of printed form petition blanks addressed to the Selectmen demanding such recall. The blanks shall be issued under the signature and official seal of the Town Clerk. They shall be dated and shall contain the names of all persons to whom they are issued. The name of the person whose recall is sought, and the grounds for the recall as stated in the affidavit. In addition, the petitions shall demand the election of a successor to said office. A copy of the petition shall be entered in the record book to be kept in the office of the Town Clerk. The recall petition shall be returned and filed with the Town Clerk on or before the first (1st) work day following twenty (20) days after the filing of the affidavit. Said petition, before being returned and filed with the Town Clerk shall be signed by a least thirty (30%) percent of the registered voters of the town, who shall add to their signatures the street and number, if any, of their residences. Within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the petition the Town Clerk shall submit the petition to the registrars of voters in the town and the registrars shall within fourteen (14) days certify thereon the number of signatures which are names of registered voters of the Town. If their certification shows the petition to be insufficient, the Town Clerk shall return the petition to the voters seeking the recall, without prejudice, however, to the filing of a new affidavit for the same purpose.

SECTION 3. If the petition shall be found and certified by the Town Clerk, to be sufficient, he shall submit the same with this certification to the Board of Selectmen within seven (7) days and the Board shall within seven days give written notice of the receipt of the certificate to the officer sought to be recalled, and shall, if the officer does not resign within seven (7) days thereafter, order an election to be held on a date to be fixed by them not less than sixty (60) nor more than ninety (90) days after the date of the Town Clerk's certification that a sufficient petition has been filed, provided, however, that if any other town election is scheduled to occur within one-hundred (100) days of said certificate, the Board of Selectmen may, in its discretion, postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of such other election. If a vacancy occurs in said office after a recall election has been ordered, the elections shall nevertheless proceed as provided herein.

SECTION 4. Any officer sought to be recalled may be a candidate to succeed himself and, unless he specifically request otherwise in writing, the Town Clerk shall place his name on the official ballot without nomination. The nomination of other candidates, the publication of the warrant for the recall election, and the conduct of same shall be in accordance with the provisions of law relating to elections

unless otherwise provided in this act.

SECTION 5. The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of his office until the recall election. If then re-elected he shall continue in the office for the remainder of his unexpired term, subject to recall as before, except as provided in section 7. If not re-elected in the recall election, he shall be deemed removed from office upon the qualification of his successor, who shall hold office during the unexpired term. If the successor fails to qualify within seven (7) days after receiving written certified notification of his election, the incumbent shall thereupon be deemed recalled and the office vacant.

SECTION 6. Ballots used in a recall election shall submit the following propositions in order indicated:-

For the recall of (Name Officer)

Against the recall of (Name of Officer)

Immediately at the right of each proposition there shall be a square in which the voter, by making a cross mark (X), may vote for either of such propositions. Under the proposition shall appear the word "candidates", the direction to voters required by MGL Chapter 54, Section 42, and beneath this the names of candidates nominated as herein before provided.

If a two-thirds majority of the votes cast upon the question of recall is in the affirmative, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be deemed elected. If a majority of votes on the question is in the negative, the ballot for the candidates need not be counted.

SECTION 7. No recall petition shall be filed against an officer of the Town within six (6) months after he takes office, nor in the case of an officer subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby, until at least twelve (12) months after that election.

SECTION 8. No person who has been recalled from an office or who has resigned from office while recall proceedings were pending against him shall be appointed to any town office within one (1) year after such recall or such resignation.

COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

By-Law Recall Provisions – Border Communities

NORTH ANDOVER

8-5-1.

Any holder of an elective office may be recalled by the voters as herein provided.

8-5-2.

One percent of the registered voters of the Town may file with the Town Clerk an affidavit containing the name of the officer sought to be recalled and a statement of the grounds for recall. The Town Clerk shall thereupon deliver to the voter the first named on such affidavit a sufficient number of copies of petition blanks demanding such recall, printed forms which he/she shall keep available. The blanks shall be issued by the Town Clerk with his signature and Official Seal attached thereto. They shall be dated and addressed to the Board of Selectmen, and shall contain the name of the person to whom they are issued, the number of petitions so issued, the name of the person whose recall is sought, the grounds for recall as stated in the affidavit, and shall be demand the election of a successor to such office.

8-5-3.

A copy of the petition shall be entered in the Town Meeting records. The recall petition shall bear the signatures and residential addresses of at least 25% of registered voters. The recall petition shall be returned to the Town Clerk within 20 working days after the filing of the affidavit.

8-5-4.

The Town Clerk shall within 24 hours of receipt submit the petition to the Registrars of Voters in the Town, and the Registrars shall within seven working days certify thereon the number of signatures which are named of registered voters.

8-5-5.

If the petition shall be found and certified by the Town Clerk to be sufficient he/she shall submit the same with his certificate to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen shall, within three working days, give written notice by registered mail of the receipt of the certificate to the officer sought to be recalled and shall, if the officer does not resign within five days thereafter, order an election to be held on a date fixed by the Board at least 64 but not more than 90 days after the date of the Town Clerk's certificate that

a sufficient petition has been filed; provided, however, that if any other Town election is to occur within 90 days after the date of the certificate, the Board of Selectmen shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of such other election.

[Amended by Chapter 414 of the Acts of 2012, approved 1-4-2013]8-5-6.

Any officer sought to be removed may be a candidate to succeed himself. The nominations of candidates, the publication of the warrant for the recall election, and the conduct of the same, shall all be in accordance with the provisions of General Law relating to elections, and the election to replace the officer sought to be removed shall be held on the same day as the recall election.

8-5-7.

The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of office until the recall election. If not recalled, he/she shall continue in office for the remainder of his unexpired term, but shall not again be subject to recall during his term of office. If recalled, he/she shall be deemed removed upon the qualification of his successor who shall hold office during the unexpired term. If the successor fails to qualify within five days after receiving notification of his election, the incumbent shall thereupon be deemed removed and the office vacant.

8-5-8.

The form of the question to be voted upon shall be substantially as follows: "shall [here insert the name and title of the elective officer whose recall is sought] be recalled?" The action of the voters to recall shall require a majority vote, but shall not be effective unless the total of those voting for and against recall shall exceed 20% of the registered voters of the Town.

8-5-9.

No person having been removed from office by recall or having resigned from office while recall proceedings were pending against him/her, shall be appointed to any Town office within two years following said removal or resignation.

WILMINGTON

SECTION 2A. Recall of Elected Officers. Any person who holds an elected town office with more than six months remaining of the term of office may be recalled from the office by the voters in the manner as herein provided.

(a) One hundred and fifty or more voters may file with the Town Clerk an affidavit containing the name of the officer whose recall is sought and a statement of the grounds upon which the petition is based. The signatures on such petition shall contain the names of at least ten voters in each of the precincts into which the town is divided for the purpose of electing town officers. If the said petition is found to be valid the Town Clerk shall thereupon deliver to the ten persons first named on such petition, petition blanks demanding said recall, printed forms of which he shall keep available. The blanks may be completed by printing or typewriting; they shall be addressed to the Board of Selectmen; they shall contain the names of the ten persons to whom they are issued and the grounds for recall as stated in the affidavit; they shall demand the election of a successor to the office; they shall be dated and signed by the Town Clerk. The recall petition shall be returned to the Town Clerk within twenty days following the date they are issued, signed by at least ten percent of the total number of persons registered to vote as of the date of the most recent town election. The Town Clerk shall within four (4) working days, commencing the day after submission with him/her submit the petitions to the Board of Registrars which shall within seven (7) working days, certify thereon the number of signatures which are names of voters.

(b) If the petitions shall be certified by the Registrars of Voters to be sufficient, the Town Clerk shall within five (5) working days, or at the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen submit the same with his/her certification. Upon its receipt of the certified petition the Board of Selectmen shall within two (2) working days, give notice, in writing, of said petition to the officer whose recall is sought. If said officer does not resign his office within five (5) working days following delivery of said notice, the Board of Selectmen shall order a special election to be held not less than sixty-five nor more than ninety days after the date of the certification of the Town Clerk that the petition is sufficient.

(c) The nomination of candidates, the publication of the warrant for the recall election and the conduct of the recall election shall be in accordance with the charter and General Laws regulating elections.

(d) Ballots used at the recall election shall state the proposition in the order indicated: For the recall of (name of officer)

Against the recall of (name of officer)

Adjacent to each proposition shall be a place to vote for either of said propositions. After the said proposition shall appear the word "candidates" and the name of the candidates arranged as determined by a drawing by lot conducted by the Town Clerk which shall be open to the public, unless another arrangement is required by a

general law. If a majority of the votes cast on the proposition is against the recall, the votes for candidates need not be counted. If the majority of the vote's cast is in favor of recall, the votes for candidates shall be counted and the candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.

(e) The incumbent shall continue to hold his office and to perform his duties until the recall election. If he is not then recalled, he shall continue in office for the remainder of his unexpired term. If the officer is recalled, he shall be deemed removed upon the certification of the election results. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes shall serve for the balance of the unexpired term.

(f) No recall shall be filed against an officer within six months after he takes office, or in the case of an officer subjected to recall and not recalled thereby, during the remainder of his unexpired term.

(g) The validation and the call for election certifies only compliance with the procedural requirements of this Act.

TEWKSBURY

SECTION 15A.

(a) Application Any person who holds an elected office with more than six months remaining of the term of office, may be recalled from the office by the voters in the manner provided in this section.

(b) Recall Petitions One hundred and forty or more voters may file with the town clerk an affidavit containing the name of the office whose recall is sought and a statement of the grounds upon which the petition is based. The signatures on such petitions shall contain the names of at least twenty voters in each of the precincts.

If said petition is found to be valid the town clerk shall thereupon deliver to the ten persons first named on such petitions, petition blanks demanding such recall, printed on forms which he shall keep available. The blanks may be completed by printing or typewriting; they shall be addressed to the board of selectmen; they shall contain the names of the ten persons to whom they are issued and the grounds for recall as stated in the affidavit; they shall demand the election of a successor to the office; they shall be dated and signed by the town clerk. The recall petitions shall be returned to the office of the town clerk within twenty days following the date they are issued, signed by at least fifty percent of the total number of persons voting at the previous annual town election.

The town clerk shall, within twenty-four hours following such filing with him, submit the petitions to the board of registrars of voters which shall within five days thereafter, certify thereon the number of signatures which are the names of voters.

(c) Recall Elections If the petitions shall be certified by the registrars of voters to be sufficient, the town clerk shall forthwith submit the same with his certificate to the board of selectmen.

Upon its receipt of the certified petitions the board of selectmen shall forthwith give notice, in writing, of said petition to the officer whose recall is sought. If said officer does not resign his office within five days following delivery of said notice, the board of selectmen shall order a special election to be held not less than thirty-five nor more than sixty days after the date of the certification of the town clerk that the petition is sufficient. If a vacancy occurs in the office after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall nevertheless proceed as provided in this section, but only the ballots for candidates need be counted.

(d) Nomination of Candidates - An officer whose recall is sought may be a candidate to succeed all candidates, the publication of the warrant for the recall election and the conduct of the recall election shall be in accordance with this act and the General Laws regulating elections.

(e) Propositions on the Ballot - Ballots used at the recall election shall state the proposition in the order indicated:

For the recall of (name of officer)

Against the recall of (name of officer)

Adjacent to each proposition shall be a place to vote for either of said propositions. After the said proposition shall appear the word “candidates” and the names of candidates arranged as prescribed by law. If a majority of the votes cast on the proposition is against the recall the votes for the candidates need not be counted. If a majority of the votes cast is in favor of the recall the votes for candidates shall be counted and the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.

(f) Officeholder The incumbent shall continue to hold his office and to perform his duties until the recall election. If he is then not recalled he shall continue in his office for the remainder of his unexpired term, subject to recall as provided in paragraph (g).

If the officer is recalled he shall be deemed removed upon the certification of the election results. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes shall serve for the balance of the unexpired term.

(g) Request of Recall Petition No recall petition shall be filed against an officer within six months after he takes office, or in the case of an officer subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby, until at least six months after the election at which his recall was submitted to the voters.

NORTH READING

6.3.1 Any elective officer of the Town may be recalled and removed from public office by the voters of the Town as herein provided. Any voter of the Town may file with the Town Clerk an affidavit containing the name and title of the elective officer whose removal is sought, together with a statement of the grounds for his removal. No recall petition may be filed against any officer until he has held office for at least six months.

6.3.2 The Town Clerk shall thereupon deliver to said voter or voters making the affidavit, copies of petition blanks demanding such recall, copies of which printed forms shall be available. Such forms shall be issued by the Town Clerk with his signature and official seal attached thereto. They shall be dated, shall be addressed to the Selectmen and shall contain the names of all the persons to whom they are issued, the name of the person whose recall is sought, the grounds of recall as stated in the affidavit, and shall demand the election of a successor in the said office. A copy of the petition shall be entered in a record book to be kept in the office of the Town Clerk. Said recall petition shall be returned and filed with the Town Clerk within twenty days after the filing of the affidavit, and shall have been signed by qualified voters of the Town, who shall add to their signatures the street and number, if any, of their residences, equal in number to at least fifteen percent of the voters registered at the last regular municipal election.

6.3.3 The Town Clerk shall within twenty-four hours of receipt submit the petition to the Registrars of Voters in the Town, and the Registrars shall within seven working days certify thereon the number of signatures which are names of registered voters of the Town.

6.3.4 If the petition shall be found and certified by the Town Clerk to be sufficient he shall submit the same with his certificate to the Selectmen within five working days, and the Selectmen shall within five working days give written notice of the receipt of the certificate to the officer sought to be recalled and shall, if the officer does not resign within five days thereafter, order an election to be held on a date fixed by them not less than seventy-five and not more than ninety days after the date of the Town Clerk's certificate that a sufficient petition has been filed; provided, however, that if any other Town election is to occur within ninety days after the date of the certificate, the Selectmen shall postpone the holding of the recall election to the date of such other election. No person shall be subject to recall if his term of office expires within ninety days of the certificate. If a vacancy occurs in said office after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall nevertheless proceed as provided in this section.

6.3.5 Any officer sought to be removed may be a candidate to succeed himself, and unless he requests otherwise in writing, the Town Clerk shall place his name on the ballot without nomination. The nomination of other candidates, the publication of the warrant for the removal election, and the conduct of the same shall all be in accordance with the provisions of law relating to elections, unless otherwise provided in this section.

6.3.6 The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of his office until the recall election. If then reelected, he shall continue in office for the remainder of his unexpired term subject to recall as before, except as provided in this act. If not reelected in the recall election, he shall be deemed removed upon the qualification of his successor, who shall hold office during the unexpired term. If the successor fails to qualify within five days after receiving notification of this election, the incumbent shall thereupon be deemed removed and the office vacant.

6.3.7 Ballots used in the recall election shall submit the following propositions in the order indicated:

For the recall of (name of officer)

Against the recall of (name of officer)

For the election of (name)

Each proposition shall be marked in accordance with the procedures for voting according to the electronic voting system used by the Town. Under the propositions shall appear the word "Candidates," and beneath this, the names of candidates nominated in accordance with the provisions of law relating to elections. If two-thirds of the votes cast upon the question of recall are in the affirmative, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected.

6.3.8 No recall petition shall be filed against an officer within six months after he takes office, nor, in the case of an officer subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby, until at least ninety days after the election at which his recall was submitted to the voters of the Town.

6.3.9 No person who has been recalled from an office or who has resigned from office while recall proceedings were pending against him, shall be appointed to any office in the Town within two years after such recall or such resignation.

COMMUNITY PARADIGM ASSOCIATES, LLC

DRACUT

Section 13 Recall Procedures

(a) Application: Any holder of an elective office enumerated in Article 3, Section 1, with more than six months remaining in the term for which he was elected, may be recalled therefrom by the voters in the manner provided in this section.

(b) Recall Petition: Two hundred or more voters may file with the Town Clerk an affidavit containing the name of the officer whose recall is sought and a statement of the grounds upon which the petition is based. At least twenty-five names of voters shall be from each precinct. The Town Clerk shall thereupon deliver to said voters petition blanks demanding such recall, printed forms of which he/she shall keep available. The blanks shall be issued by the Town Clerk with his/her signature and official seal attached thereto. They shall be dated; shall be addressed to the Board of Selectmen; shall contain the names of all persons to whom they are issued, the name of the person whose recall is sought, the grounds for recall as stated in the affidavit; and shall demand the election of a successor to the said office. A copy of the affidavit shall be entered in a record book to be kept in the office of the Town Clerk. The recall petitions shall be returned and filed with the Town Clerk within twenty days following the date of the filing of the affidavit, signed by at least ten percent of the voters and containing their names and addresses; provided, however, that not more than twenty-five percent of the total number shall be from any precinct. The Town Clerk shall, within twenty-four hours of receipt, submit the petitions to the registrars of voters who shall forthwith certify thereon the number of signatures that are names of voters.

(c) Recall Election: If the petition shall be certified by the Town Clerk to be sufficient, he/she shall forthwith submit the same with his/her certificate to the Board of Selectmen. Upon its receipt of the certificate, the Board of Selectmen shall forthwith give written notice of such petition and certificate to the officer whose recall is sought. If said officer does not resign his/her office within five days after delivery of such notice, the Board of Selectmen shall order an election to be held not less than sixty-four, nor more than ninety days after the date of the Town Clerk's certificate of the sufficient petition. If, however, any other Town Election is to occur within one hundred and twenty days after the date of the certificate, the Board of Selectmen shall hold the recall election on the date of such other election. If a vacancy occurs in said office after a recall election has been ordered, the election shall nevertheless proceed as provided in this section, and the ballots for candidates shall, notwithstanding a recall provision to the contrary, be counted.

(d) Nomination of Candidates: Any officer whose recall is sought may not be a candidate to succeed himself in the recall election. The nomination of candidates, the publication of the warrant for the recall election, and the conduct of same shall all be in accordance with the provisions of law relating to elections, unless otherwise provided in this section.

(e) Propositions on Ballot: Ballots used in a recall election shall state the following propositions in the order indicated:

For the recall of (name of officer) Against the recall of (name of officer)

Adjacent to each proposition, there shall be a place to vote for either of the said propositions. After the proposition shall appear the word “candidates” and the names of candidates nominated as required in Section 42 of Chapter 54 of the General Laws. If a majority of the votes cast

upon the question of recall is in the affirmative, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. If a majority of votes on the question is in the negative, the ballots for candidates need not be counted, except as provided in (c) above.

(f) Officeholder: The incumbent shall continue to perform the duties of his office until the recall election. If he/she is not recalled in the election he/she shall continue in office for the remainder of his/her unexpired term, subject to recall as before, except as provided in this section.

If he/she is recalled in the election, he/she shall be deemed removed upon the qualification of his/her successor who shall hold office during the unexpired term. If the successor fails to qualify within five days after receiving notification of his/her election, the incumbent shall thereupon be deemed removed and the office vacant.

(g) Repeat of Recall Petition: No recall petition shall be filed against an officer within three months after he takes office, or in the case of an officer subjected to a recall election and not recalled thereby, until at least six months after the election at which his recall was submitted to the voters.



Brookline PAX

think globally • act locally

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lee Biernbaum via groups.io <lee=acrossb.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WA30 mas [PAX WA9 & WA30 addenda Recommendations
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 4:10:36 PM

I, for one, can't wait to find out what I did to get a big red "X" next to my name. Though it sounds like we only "may" hear about it tomorrow (what a tease!).

Coming from many folks, that kind of thing could be considered threatening... but in this case, one can only suspect it's yet another bit of abstruse shorthand.

Lee Biernbaum
TMM P9

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io <bettina.neuefeind=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA ListServ
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Scent-sitivity in the Auditorium
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 4:11:13 PM

Dear friends and colleagues,

As you prepare for in person town meeting, please refrain from applying perfume, cologne, or other scented products. We have members of our community who are sensitive or allergic to fragrances, and your cooperation helps ensure that everyone can fully participate.

Thank you so much for your understanding and support!

Bettina

--
Bettina Neuefeind
TMM P1

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bettina.neuefeind@gmail.com
Cc: ListServ TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Scent-sitivity in the Auditorium
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 5:05:51 PM

Thank you!!!!!

Regina Frawley 17

> On Jun 4, 2025, at 4:11 PM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io <bettina.neuefeind=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Dear friends and colleagues,
>
> As you prepare for in person town meeting, please refrain from applying perfume, cologne, or other scented products. We have members of our community who are sensitive or allergic to fragrances, and your cooperation helps ensure that everyone can fully participate.
>
> Thank you so much for your understanding and support!
>
> Bettina
>
> --
> Bettina Neuefeind
> TMM P1

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Article 30 Voting Sequence and Debate
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 5:10:56 PM

Dear TMM's:

As I'm sure you know, for good cause, both Moderator Wishinsky and Assistant Moderator Gadsby have voluntarily recused themselves from any involvement moderating Article 30. So, for better or worse, you are stuck with me.

Here is what will be before you and how we will consider it:

The original resolution is not being moved. Accordingly, the main motion is Mr. Rosenthal's referral motion found on Supplement 1, page 1. It calls for referral of the subject matter to a Committee appointed to the Select Board with a brief, three point charge.

The Advisory Committee will be moving to amend Mr. Rosenthal's motion by deleting the words "review, evaluate and" from numbered paragraph 2 of the Committee's charge. If accepted the Committee would be directed to "further augment" the work of the Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government but not also to "review and evaluate" the work of the now dissolved Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government. The Advisory Committee voted favorable action on the Motion with that Amendment. The language that the Advisory Committee voted favorable action on can be found on Supplement 4, pages 4-5.

Mr. Biernbaum then filed a motion to refer the subject matter of Article 30 to the Brookline Youth Council. His motion can be found on Supplement 5, page 1. This is a unique situation of a motion to refer being filed after the main motion is already a motion to refer. I understand his motion to simply be intended to send the subject matter to the Youth Council instead of a Select Board Committee. Accordingly, I deem it to be in substance the offering of a substitute motion. This ruling has some wonky procedural impacts which involve priority of "higher ranked" and "lower ranked" motions. I'm happy to explain further if anyone would like further explanation but I suspect most folks would prefer I get to the point sooner rather than later. Suffice it to say that I believe that I have discretion to decide what voting order makes the most sense and will be least confusing to Town Meeting.

So here is how we will proceed:

There will be one debate on Mr. Rosenthal's motion, the AC amendment and Mr. Biernbaum's substitute motion. I will not entertain a motion to terminate debate until Town Meeting has heard the Proponent's presentation, the principal Opponent's presentation and from the AC, Select Board and Mr. Biernbaum. Whether I entertain a motion to call the question at that point will depend on whether I believe that Town Meeting has had enough information to reach an informed decision. There are a number of additional speakers signed up on all sides. I am well aware that this is the last article on the last night of Town Meeting and folks would like to go home. I would ask all speakers to keep that in mind and regardless of how much time they are allowed to try their best to only use as much as they really need. I would again remind all speakers that this is not a vehicle for debate on the merits of Town versus City form of government and I will rein in anyone who strays into that debate.

Which leads us to the vote. We will first vote on the Advisory Committee's motion to amend. If this passes it becomes the main motion. If it fails Mr. Rosenthal's version with all three words remains the main motion. We will then vote on Mr. Biernbaum's substitute motion to refer the subject to the Youth Council instead. If this passes, it becomes the main motion and we would then have a vote on whether to pass it. If it fails, then whichever version-Rosenthal original or AC amended would remain the main motion and we would have an up or down vote on it.

There have been some who I greatly respect who have suggested that it would be less confusing to vote on Mr. Biernbaum's motion first but I believe it makes more sense to determine the charge to the committee before deciding what committee it will be sent to. Ms. Vogt has offered to prepare one of her helpful flow charts and I'm hoping that she has time to do so. In any event, I have made my rulings and as JFK said after the Bay of Pigs, any mistakes that were made were mine. If you are frustrated, angered or annoyed by my rulings, you can console yourself with the fact that after this Article is finished you get Neil and Sandy back. In the meantime, I am always happy to field questions and concerns and I'll see you this evening. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12

Jonathan A. Karon
Karon Law, LLC
10 High Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 405-3200
jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Ernest A. Frey via groups.io <ernestafrey=comcast.net@groups.io>
To: TMMA listserv
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Regarding Articles 18 & 19
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 9:10:26 PM

The comment I had hoped to make before the question was called and approved on the discussion, was a commendation to the petitioners about their reaching out to the business community for their input and reaction to these articles.

Brookline businesses are frequently affected by warrant articles discussed at Town Meeting, but are too often not brought into the discussion.

Certainly, these articles directly affect businesses more so than many others. So, getting their reaction was pretty much essential.

I encourage petitioners to consider the Brookline community as they draft their articles.

Thank you,

Ernie Frey
TMM-7
Sent from Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA List Serve
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Article 24
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 10:18:03 PM

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my Concern is how many fees are already on sales. We should know that before we vote. If we don't know, vote no on the article.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA List Serve
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Article 24
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 10:18:06 PM

---

my Concern is how many fees are already on sales. We should know that before we vote. If we don't know, vote no on the article.

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] [CAUTION] This email originated from a sender outside of the Town of Brookline mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:02:48 PM

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io <bettina.neuefeind=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 8:41:57 AM

Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am–not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.

In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.

No Action on WA30

It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.

I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.

As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He nonetheless completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents"; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like "the tradeoffs with each alternative"; and (3) for its management, "an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall

thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Deborah Hatzieleftheriad via groups.io <Debbiehatz6=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bettina.neuefeind@gmail.com
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [m] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 8:47:50 AM

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 8:41 AM Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io <bettina.neuefeind=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; "Brookline TM"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 10:48:00 AM

>>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<

By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

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>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …

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As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

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commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Deborah Hatzieleftheriad via groups.io <Debbiehatz6=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Debbiehatz6@gmail.com
Cc: bettina.neuefeind@gmail.com; Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [m] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:27:28 AM

I am really sorry for this message, I did not forward this to the list serve, I do not know how this happened

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 8:47 AM Deborah Hatzieleftheriad via groups.io <Debbiehatz6=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35:51 AM

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
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> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

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Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

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Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:59:14 AM

Colleagues,

I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph

Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: mtoffel@hbs.edu
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 12:22:28 PM

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> **Sent:** Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
> **To:** neil@nrgordon.com
> **Cc:** Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Subject:** Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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Mike Toffel, TMM8

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io>
To: ginatmma@gmail.com
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 12:32:09 PM

Hi Regina,

In my note, I mentioned "**several** Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members…"

Your response includes your apparent disagreement with someone who claimed that "the `majority' were long-time TMMs" which you state is "Utterly not true."

I'm not sure who made that statement, but it wasn't me. I agree it wouldn't be true. I'm sure you didn't mean to mischaracterize my statement, but I wanted to ensure we are all working from the same facts and avoiding misattributions.

The meetings I attended included several other long-time TMMs (including the petitioner and Neil G who commented earlier in this thread) who weren't shy about involving themselves in the conversation and reinforced a pro-TM perspective, IMO. The videos make this obvious to others interested in the facts.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Regina Frawley via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 12:22 PM
To: Toffel, Michael <mtoffel@hbs.edu>
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 12:44:24 PM

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

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To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as “research,” was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for “substantial” work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the Moderator’s Committee.”

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn’t require study or discussion, and makes no mention of “improvement.” The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming “back to Town Meeting*.”

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who

feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

> | **<image001.jpg>**
>
> --
> Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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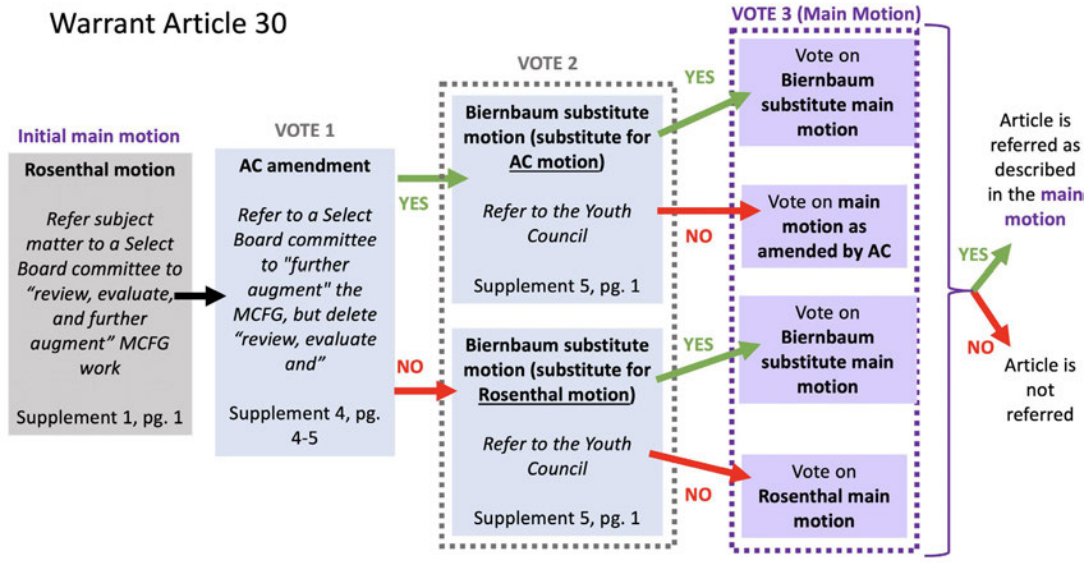
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marissa Vogt via groups.io <vogt4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Cc: Jonathan A. Karon
Subject: [brooklinetmma] WA 30 voting flow chart
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 1:53:59 PM
Attachments: Screen Shot 2025-06-05 at 1.52.58 PM.png

Dear TMM colleagues,

Here is a voting flow chart that illustrates the expected vote order under article 30:



This flow chart has been approved by Assistant Moderator Karon and matches the process described in his email yesterday, which you can re-read at the bottom of this email if you prefer written instructions rather than visual ones. Any mistakes are mine.

(For full disclosure, I am seconding Lee Biernbaum's substitute motion to refer WA 30 to the Youth Council but I attempted to make the flow chart as neutral as possible.)

See you all tonight.

Cheers,
Marissa

--
Marissa Vogt (she/her/hers)
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 6 & Library Trustee

On Wed, Jun 4, 2025 at 5:10 PM Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMM's:
>
> As I'm sure you know, for good cause, both Moderator Wishinsky and Assistant Moderator Gadsby have voluntarily recused themselves from any involvement moderating Article 30. So, for better or worse, you are stuck with me.

Here is what will be before you and how we will consider it:

The original resolution is not being moved. Accordingly, the main motion is Mr. Rosenthal's referral motion found on Supplement 1, page 1. It calls for referral of the subject matter to a Committee appointed to the Select Board with a brief, three point charge.

The Advisory Committee will be moving to amend Mr. Rosenthal's motion by deleting the words "review, evaluate and" from numbered paragraph 2 of the Committee's charge. If accepted the Committee would be directed to "further augment" the work of the Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government but not also to "review and evaluate" the work of the now dissolved Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government. The Advisory Committee voted favorable action on the Motion with that Amendment. The language that the Advisory Committee voted favorable action on can be found on Supplement 4, pages 4-5.

Mr. Biernbaum then filed a motion to refer the subject matter of Article 30 to the Brookline Youth Council. His motion can be found on Supplement 5, page 1. This is a unique situation of a motion to refer being filed after the main motion is already a motion to refer. I understand his motion to simply be intended to send the subject matter to the Youth Council instead of a Select Board Committee. Accordingly, I deem it to be in substance the offering of a substitute motion. This ruling has some wonky procedural impacts which involve priority of "higher ranked" and "lower ranked" motions. I'm happy to explain further if anyone would like further explanation but I suspect most folks would prefer I get to the point sooner rather than later. Suffice it to say that I believe that I have discretion to decide what voting order makes the most sense and will be least confusing to Town Meeting.

So here is how we will proceed:

There will be one debate on Mr. Rosenthal's motion, the AC amendment and Mr. Biernbaum's substitute motion. I will not entertain a motion to terminate debate until Town Meeting has heard the Proponent's presentation, the principal Opponent's presentation and from the AC, Select Board and Mr. Biernbaum. Whether I entertain a motion to call the question at that point will depend on whether I believe that Town Meeting has had enough information to reach an informed decision. There are a number of additional speakers signed up on all sides. I am well aware that this is the last article on the last night of Town Meeting and folks would like to go home. I would ask all speakers to keep that in mind and regardless of how much time they are allowed to try their best to only use as much as they really need. I would again remind all speakers that this is not a vehicle for debate on the merits of Town versus City form of government and I will rein in anyone who strays into that debate.

Which leads us to the vote. We will first vote on the Advisory Committee's motion to amend. If this passes it becomes the main motion. If it fails Mr. Rosenthal's version with all three words remains the main motion. We will then vote on Mr. Biernbaum's substitute motion to refer the subject to the Youth Council instead. If this passes, it becomes the main motion and we would then have a vote on whether to pass it. If it fails, then whichever version-Rosenthal original or AC amended would remain the main motion and we would have an up or down vote on it.

There have been some who I greatly respect who have suggested that it would be less

confusing to vote on Mr. Biernbaum's motion first but I believe it makes more sense to determine the charge to the committee before deciding what committee it will be sent to. Ms. Vogt has offered to prepare one of her helpful flow charts and I'm hoping that she has time to do so. In any event, I have made my rulings and as JFK said after the Bay of Pigs, any mistakes that were made were mine. If you are frustrated, angered or annoyed by my rulings, you can console yourself with the fact that after this Article is finished you get Neil and Sandy back. In the meantime, I am always happy to field questions and concerns and I'll see you this evening. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12

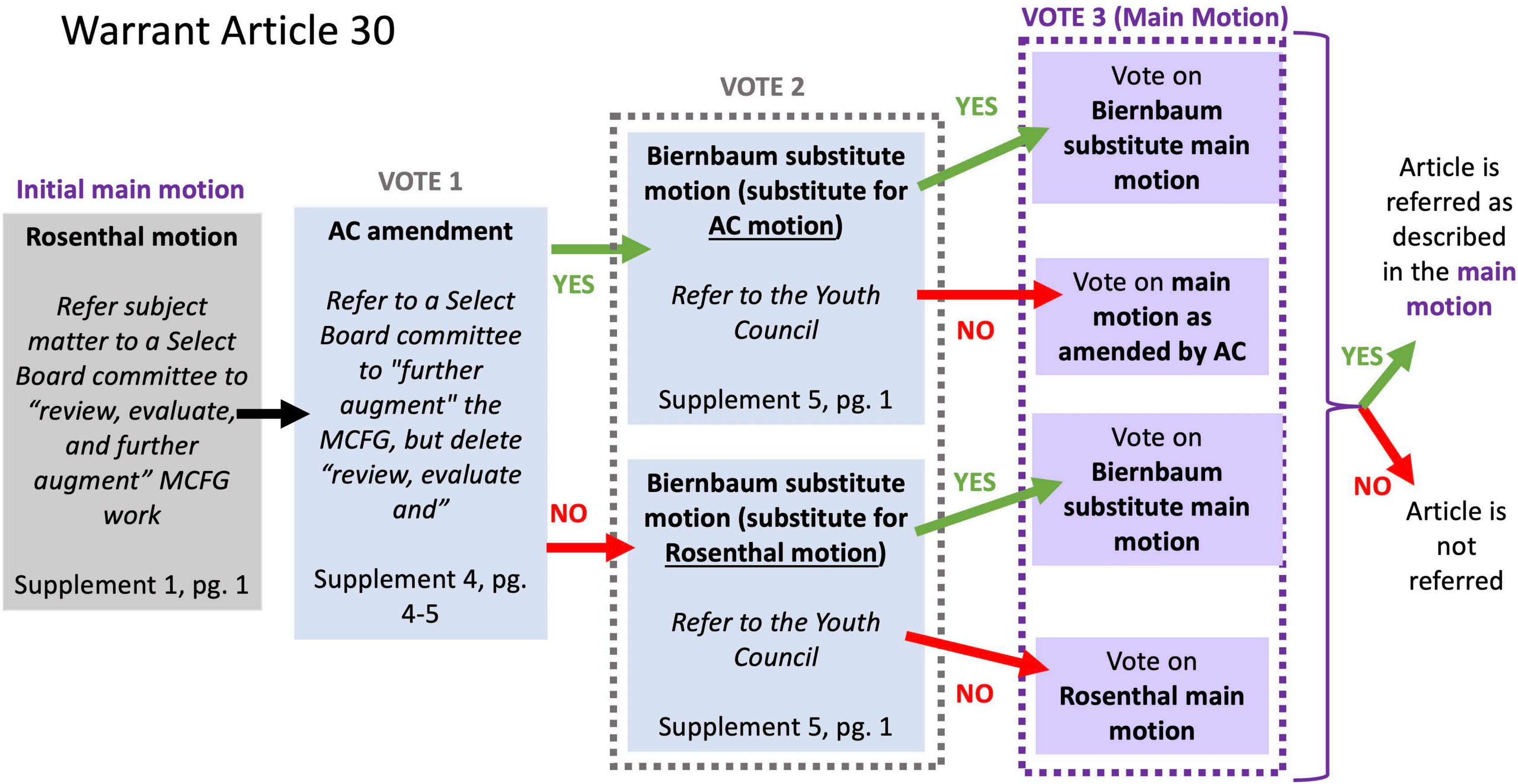
Jonathan A. Karon
Karon Law, LLC
10 High Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 405-3200
jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

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Warrant Article 30



From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 2:08:07 PM

What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.

How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?

Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.

Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

> Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am–not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.
>
> In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.
>
> **No Action on WA30**
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> It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.
>
> I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.
>
> As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He nonetheless completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.
>
> **Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31**

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents"; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like "the tradeoffs with each alternative"; and (3) for its management, "an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear."
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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Katherine Haenschen via groups.io <keh303=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	joe@attorneyross.com
Cc:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31
Date:	Thursday, June 5, 2025 2:42:49 PM

Hi folks --

Just to clarify (as both a Town Meeting Member and an appointed member of the Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government) I will refer you all to the specific text of Warrant Article 18, which passed in November 2023 Town Meeting by a vote of 155-58 to form the committee.

Here is a link to the Older Town Meeting files: https://www.brooklinema.gov/3884/Older-Town-Meeting-Files
You can download the linked file "2023 STM November 14 Minutes"
and on pages 317-318 (using Microsoft Word's internal pagination, not the formatted page numbers) read the approved language, which I will paste here for convenience (emphasis and highlighting are mine):

ARTICLE 18
Resolution on creating a Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government
Submitted by: Jonathan Margolis, TMM7, Neil R. Gordon, TMM1

VOTED that the Town adopt the following resolution:
WHEREAS, there is much interest in making the operation of Brookline's government fairer and more efficient, and
WHEREAS, there are many forms and permutations for municipal government in Massachusetts; and
WHEREAS, among those active in Town government, there is currently a debate about the best form for Brookline's government; and
WHEREAS, democratic government depends upon an informed electorate; and
WHEREAS, the details of various forms of government are not widely known, and
WHEREAS, the voters may subsequently be asked whether to adopt substantial changes to the form of Brookline's government;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that Town Meeting,
1. Requests that the Moderator appoint a committee to **examine the various forms of municipal government in Massachusetts** as they relate to Brookline;
b. that the committee objectively evaluate the positive and negative aspects of such forms, including fiscal impacts;
c. that the committee be empowered to recommend among various proposals or alternative forms for Brookline government, if it chooses to do so; and
d. that the committee be directed to report its findings, and any recommendations, after holding public meetings, to Town Meeting and make it available to all residents of the Town no later than August 31, 2024, or such other date as the Moderator may select.

Approved: AYE: 155 NO: 58 ABSTAINED: 10

You may also see the slightly amended charge of the committee on the Moderator's Committee page on the Town Website (issued by former Moderator Kate Poverman), here:

https://www.brooklinema.gov/3729/Moderators-Committee-on-Forms-of-Governm

I will paste it here, again for convenience:

1. That the Committee objectively and fairly evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the forms of government in Massachusetts. This analysis may include, but is not limited to, examining the impact that changing the form of government would have on staffing requirements.
2. That the Committee hold one or more public hearings.
3. The Committee may recommend, if it chooses, one or more alternative forms of government for Brookline, providing that a written explanation for each recommendation be provided.
4. Reports and Recommendations
a. The Committee shall present a Preliminary Report on its findings and recommendations, if any, to Town Meeting by October 1, 2024. The Preliminary Report shall be made available to all Brookline residents by posting it on the Town's website (www.brooklinema.gov) by October 1, 2024.
b. The Committee shall submit a Final Report on its findings and recommendations, if any, to Town Meeting by May 1, 2025. The Final Report will be made available to all Brookline residents by posting it on the Town's website (www.brooklinema.gov) by May 1, 2025.

The Moderator's Committee was not charged with finding ways to improve Town Meeting. The Moderators' Committee was charged with examining forms of municipal government in Massachusetts. If anyone would like a Moderator's Committee to explore the ways that Town Meeting can be improved, they should write a Warrant Article with that specific charge and pass it at Town Meeting.

Cheers,
Katherine Haenschen
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 17

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 2:08 PM Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:

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>
> Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces
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> *For reference:
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM; jklein728@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 3:09:46 PM

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

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Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
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Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

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I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

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their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our

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> Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.
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--
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--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io>
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com; TMMA Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 4:40:02 PM

I agree with J Margolis

Jerry Tuckman TMM9

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see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

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I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

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Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
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87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: gtuckman@hotmail.com
Cc: jjmargolis@yahoo.com; TMMA Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 4:47:19 PM

Yes, very well stated, Jon. Thank you.

— Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 4:40 PM Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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>
> -Mike Toffel, TMM8
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
> **Sent:** Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
> **To:** neil@nrgordon.com

Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



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negative aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

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No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee.

Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners

> actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.
>
> Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.
>
> **Jonathan Golden, PhD**
>
> **Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting**
>
> **<image001.jpg>**

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: gtuckman@hotmail.com
Cc: Jonathan Margolis; TMMA Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 4:50:59 PM

It is possible, perhaps even likely, that candidates would run who are running because they are open minded and would like to explore the ideas of ways to improve the efficiency of our town's governance, as Joe Ross suggests is a reasonable thing to do.

That is what the charter commission process envisions, notwithstanding Jon Margolis' fears of an inherent bias in the process.

The alternative is to keep appointing new study commissions that delay the beginning of a process that would actually do something, rather than just study again what we have already studied to death. Setting up another study committee only guarantees that we will never do anything to change what we have, a bris that prevents addressing flaws and updating dated procedures to address the demands of changing times. That is the real bias.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 4:39 PM, Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I agree with J Margolis
>
> Jerry Tuckman TMM9
>
> > On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.
> >
> > The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would

almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK,

by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I

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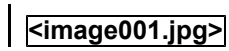
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Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Article 30 Voting Sequence and Debate
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 4:53:36 PM

These generally seem like reasonable questions. I'm assuming that Mr. Biernbaum will explain his rationale for referring this to the Youth Council which may or may not answer your questions. Jon Karon

Jonathan A. Karon
Karon Law, LLC
10 High Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 405-3200
jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 3:48 PM Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com> wrote:

> Dear Asst. Moderator –
>
> In connection with Article 30 and the motion to refer to the Brookline Youth Council –
>
> does the Council have the power to be the recipient of a Town Meeting referral? I'd note that item 3 of its Duties and Responsibilities is "3. Interact with other boards and commissions to discuss issues, concerns and needed improvements." But, is Town Meeting an "other board" or "commission"?
>
> More fundamentally, though, must the Youth Council accept a referral from Town Meeting – or, indeed, from any instrumentality of the Town? And, if it does accept a referral – let's say, from Town Meeting – would that fall under Duties and Responsibilities item 4: "4. Work on town-sanctioned community service projects under the direction of the Town Administrator". Question – is this something the Town Administrator is willing to make the time for? And, if he is, does Town Meeting want him doing this?
>
> Respectfully but curious.
>
> Jonathan Davis
>
> TMM Pct. 17

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Karon via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 5:11 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Article 30 Voting Sequence and Debate

Dear TMM's:

As I'm sure you know, for good cause, both Moderator Wishinsky and Assistant Moderator Gadsby have voluntarily recused themselves from any involvement moderating Article 30. So, for better or worse, you are stuck with me.

Here is what will be before you and how we will consider it:

The original resolution is not being moved. Accordingly, the main motion is Mr. Rosenthal's referral motion found on Supplement 1, page 1. It calls for referral of the subject matter to a Committee appointed to the Select Board with a brief, three point charge.

The Advisory Committee will be moving to amend Mr. Rosenthal's motion by deleting the words "review, evaluate and" from numbered paragraph 2 of the Committee's charge. If accepted the Committee would be directed to "further augment" the work of the Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government but not also to "review and evaluate" the work of the now dissolved Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government. The Advisory Committee voted favorable action on the Motion with that Amendment. The language that the Advisory Committee voted favorable action on can be found on Supplement 4, pages 4-5.

Mr. Biernbaum then filed a motion to refer the subject matter of Article 30 to the Brookline Youth Council. His motion can be found on Supplement 5, page 1. This is a unique situation of a motion to refer being filed after the main motion is already a motion to refer. I understand his motion to simply be intended to send the subject matter to the Youth Council instead of a Select Board Committee. Accordingly, I deem it to be in substance the offering of a substitute motion. This ruling has some wonky procedural impacts which involve priority of "higher ranked" and "lower ranked" motions. I'm happy to explain further if

anyone would like further explanation but I suspect most folks would prefer I get to the point sooner rather than later. Suffice it to say that I believe that I have discretion to decide what voting order makes the most sense and will be least confusing to Town Meeting.

So here is how we will proceed:

There will be one debate on Mr. Rosenthal's motion, the AC amendment and Mr. Biernbaum's substitute motion. I will not entertain a motion to terminate debate until Town Meeting has heard the Proponent's presentation, the principal Opponent's presentation and from the AC, Select Board and Mr. Biernbaum. Whether I entertain a motion to call the question at that point will depend on whether I believe that Town Meeting has had enough information to reach an informed decision. There are a number of additional speakers signed up on all sides. I am well aware that this is the last article on the last night of Town Meeting and folks would like to go home. I would ask all speakers to keep that in mind and regardless of how much time they are allowed to try their best to only use as much as they really need. I would again remind all speakers that this is not a vehicle for debate on the merits of Town versus City form of government and I will rein in anyone who strays into that debate.

Which leads us to the vote. We will first vote on the Advisory Committee's motion to amend. If this passes it becomes the main motion. If it fails Mr. Rosenthal's version with all three words remains the main motion. We will then vote on Mr. Biernbaum's substitute motion to refer the subject to the Youth Council instead. If this passes, it becomes the main motion and we would then have a vote on whether to pass it. If it fails, then whichever version-Rosenthal original or AC amended would remain the main motion and we would have an up or down vote on it.

There have been some who I greatly respect who have suggested that it would be less confusing to vote on Mr. Biernbaum's motion first but I believe it makes more sense to determine the charge to the committee before deciding what committee it will be sent to. Ms. Vogt has offered to prepare one of her helpful flow charts and I'm hoping that she has time to do so. In any event, I have made my rulings and as JFK said after the Bay of Pigs, any mistakes that were made were mine. If you are frustrated, angered or annoyed by my rulings, you can console yourself with the fact that after this Article is finished you get Neil and Sandy back. In the meantime, I am always happy to field questions and concerns and I'll see you this evening. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12

Jonathan A. Karon

Karon Law, LLC

10 High Street, Suite 401

Boston, MA 02110

(617) 405-3200

jakaron@karonlaw.net

www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Article 30 sign up closes at 5:15
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 4:59:31 PM

Okay folks, if you want to speak on Article 30 you have until 5:15 pm to sign up by e-mail to tmmsignup@gmail.com. If you haven't already guessed there are already a number of speakers signed up so you may well not be reached. Jon Karon Assistant Moderator and TMM 12

Jonathan A. Karon
Karon Law, LLC
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lee Biernbaum via groups.io <lee=acrossb.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Article 30 Voting Sequence and Debate
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 5:19:40 PM

I would presume the ability is quite similar to the CIDCR which has similar language in its bylaws regarding boards and commissions, to which we refer to things.

Haven't been able to search conclusively as I'm mobile but I don't see any obvious ability of the CPSC to accept referrals at all.

Lee Biernbaum
TMM p9

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: gtuckman@hotmail.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: TMMA Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 5:21:34 PM

Are you open-minded, Andrew, or do you know which side you would probably come down on? If the latter, not asking you to reveal which side, or whether you would run for the putative commission.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 04:50:59 PM EDT, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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That is what the charter commission process envisions, notwithstanding Jon Margolis' fears of an inherent bias in the process.

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I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com

Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

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Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



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examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors)

Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge

school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

> Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.
>
> **Jonathan Golden, PhD**
>
> **Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting**
>
> **<image001.jpg>**

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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To: andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: "TMMA Serve"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 5:48:15 PM

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Absolutely, but recognize that all elected are elected townwide, and as with any contested townwide race, money matters. Could an open-minded individual, or any other individual, compete against a well-funded slate?

>>That is what the charter commission process envisions, …<<

Wherever this process is envisioned, it's not in state law. MGL says nothing about studying, researching, exploring or anything of the like. The ballot question will be promoted by a campaign. Opposition will be promoted by a campaign, Candidates will campaign. Yes, the process is inherently biased.

>>The alternative is to keep appointing new study commissions that delay the beginning of a process …<<

The ballot question process isn't delayed and can't be delayed by Town Meeting passing a resolution. The City Charter Campaign will either gather sufficient signatures or they won't.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

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> together.
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> Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.
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> **Jonathan Golden, PhD**
>
> **Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting**
>
> **<image001.jpg>**

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jklein728@gmail.com; "Brookline TM"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 6:08:11 PM

>> Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."<<

My criticism of the MCFG has been about process, about bias, and about trying to pass off supposition as "research."

As for the petitioner asking for a "do over," the petitioner's motion specifically used the word "augment."

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Klein via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 12:44 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

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Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

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> Hi, Mike
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The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
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> -Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

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> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be

superior to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<
The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<
I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<
As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<
No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

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--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: jklein728@gmail.com; Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 6:28:59 PM

It is regrettable that this thread has become what it is.

A colleague of ours cannot make it tonight and posted his remarks here.

I find the decision to litigate this issue here in this way disappointing. We do not conduct ourselves like this on the floor of Town Meeting - and we should not do so here prior to such a debate.

Who is persuaded by a (dare I say) toxic back and forth like this? Certainly not I.

Kevin MacKenzie
TMM P13

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 18:08 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

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Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

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Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

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Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA listserv
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Tonight's session
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 7:10:04 PM

We are having difficulty reaching a quorum. If you have not signed in, please consider joining us in the auditorium or remotely (if permitted).

Regards, Sandy Gadsby
Assistant Moderator
Get Outlook for iOS

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To: TMMA listserv
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Tonight's session
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 7:13:34 PM

We now have a quorum, but join us anyway for the festivities.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 7:09:52 PM
To: TMMA listserv <BrooklineTMMA@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Tonight's session

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Regards, Sandy Gadsby
Assistant Moderator
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sassan Zelkha via groups.io <sassanbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Please support WA-30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 8:27:52 PM

Dear Town Meeting Members,

I support Warrant Article 30 because Brookline deserves a complete, balanced, and credible analysis of the governmental options available to us. The original work of the Moderator's Committee was a valuable first step, but many in the community—including those who participated—acknowledged that the process had shortcomings and that its final report left important questions unanswered.

Warrant Article 30, as amended, strikes a thoughtful balance. It avoids re-litigating the past or discrediting volunteer efforts, while recognizing the need to augment the initial work with additional rigor, clarity, and transparency. The goal is not to replace, but to build on what's been done—filling gaps, correcting imbalances, and ensuring the report truly reflects the range of perspectives and implications.

Importantly, even those who support a shift to a city form of government should support a process that is broadly seen as fair, inclusive, and legitimate. No one—regardless of where they stand—wants the final outcome to be undermined by claims that the process was rushed, biased, or predetermined. A thoughtful and transparent approach benefits everyone, and is essential if we are to move forward together.

Brookline's governance decisions deserve to be made based on a full and fair understanding of the options. For that reason, I respectfully urge support for Warrant Article 30.

Sassan Zelkha
Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
Pronouns: He/Him/His

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] WA28: Save or Democracy
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 8:40:15 PM

Hello Fellow Town Meeting Members,

I am proud to live in a community that voted so overwhelmingly to approve WA28.

I did not get the chance to give my speech tonight, but wanted to provide you all with the remarks I prepared.

In just the first few months since the Trump administration came to power, it has completely undermined our constitutional order.

He refuses to enforce laws passed by Congress.

He attacks independent agencies.

Threatens judges.

Ignores court rulings.

His deputy chief of staff has even called for the end of habeas corpus.

I rise today not just to list grievances, but to remind us of who we are—and what this meeting represents.

Yes, Town Meeting often feels routine. We fund schools, fix roads, support the vulnerable.

But every time we gather in this room, we do something quietly radical: we defy the historical norm of tyranny.

For most of human history, kings and emperors ruled. Ordinary people had no say.

But here in Massachusetts, we changed that. When the British Crown grew too heavy, towns like Brookline rose up. Ordinary people claimed power. And we've inherited it.

Our union was born flawed, scarred by the original sin of slavery, but in 1850, when Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, Massachusetts town meetings pushed back.

Marshfield passed a resolution declaring:

"Until we are prepared to repudiate the principles of Independence and abjure all our ideas of justice and humanity, of truth and duty, we can be under no voluntary obedience to this act."

They didn't nullify federal law. They did something stronger: they reminded people of their moral compass.

I stand with those patriots.

This resolution calls on us to dissent—not with violence, but with clarity and courage.

In 2017, Yale historian Timothy Snyder wrote *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century.* One of those lessons was Rule #19:

"Be a patriot. Set a good example of what America means for the generations to come. They will need it."

Patriotism is not loving your country no matter what. It's loving the idea of what your country can be—and fighting tirelessly for that vision.

When our posterity studies this moment—with an administration gone rogue and oligarchs winning the class war—they will ask what we did.

With this resolution, we make it clear: we did not accept, we did not concede, we did not stand idly by.

Just as I turned to our ancestors for guidance, future generations will look to us.

Let them find a town that stood for the good society, where all can thrive—and where the vulnerable were protected.

So Let's speak now, in our own front yard, and make our Voices, combined with the voices of other towns and cities across America, loud enough that the White House trembles with the echo of our conviction.

That is the point of this article.

And that is why I proudly support it.

Thank you, and may God bless Brookline, and may God bless America.

Solidarity,
Anthony Buono TMM 9

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: sassanbrookline@gmail.com
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Please support WA-30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 9:14:35 PM

I agree! Thanks, Sassan.

Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee

On Thursday, June 5, 2025, Sassan Zelkha via groups.io <sassanbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear Town Meeting Members,
>
> I support Warrant Article 30 because Brookline deserves a complete, balanced, and credible analysis of the governmental options available to us. The original work of the Moderator's Committee was a valuable first step, but many in the community—including those who participated—acknowledged that the process had shortcomings and that its final report left important questions unanswered.
>
> Warrant Article 30, as amended, strikes a thoughtful balance. It avoids re-litigating the past or discrediting volunteer efforts, while recognizing the need to augment the initial work with additional rigor, clarity, and transparency. The goal is not to replace, but to build on what's been done—filling gaps, correcting imbalances, and ensuring the report truly reflects the range of perspectives and implications.
>
> Importantly, even those who support a shift to a city form of government should support a process that is broadly seen as fair, inclusive, and legitimate. No one—regardless of where they stand—wants the final outcome to be undermined by claims that the process was rushed, biased, or predetermined. A thoughtful and transparent approach benefits everyone, and is essential if we are to move forward together.
>
> Brookline's governance decisions deserve to be made based on a full and fair understanding of the options. For that reason, I respectfully urge support for Warrant Article 30.
>
> Sassan Zelkha
> Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
> Pronouns: He/Him/His

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew M. Fischer via groups.io <AFischer=jasonandfischer.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Margolis
Cc: gtuckman@hotmail.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Serve TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 10:04:38 PM

I would like to think that I am open-minded. I hope others find me so.

Andrew M. Fischer
TMM p13.

Sent from my ipad

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 5:21 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Are you open-minded, Andrew, or do you know which side you would probably come down on? If the latter, not asking you to reveal which side, or whether you would run for the putative commission.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
>
> On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 04:50:59 PM EDT, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> It is possible, perhaps even likely, that candidates would run who are running because they are open minded and would like to explore the ideas of ways to improve the efficiency of our town's governance, as Joe Ross suggests is a reasonable thing to do.
>
> That is what the charter commission process envisions, notwithstanding Jon Margolis' fears of an inherent bias in the process.
>
> The alternative is to keep appointing new study commissions that delay the beginning of a process that would actually do something, rather than just study again what we have already studied to death. Setting up another study committee only guarantees that we will never do anything to change what we have, a bris that prevents addressing flaws and updating dated procedures to address the demands of changing times. That is the real bias.
>
> Andrew Fischer
> Town Meeting Member

Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

On Jun 5, 2025, at 4:39 PM, Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I agree with J Margolis

Jerry Tuckman TMM9

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be

much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an

official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run.
> One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the

pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-

standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>

Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work

of MCFG is complete.<<

By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the

> Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the Moderator’s Committee.”
>
> >>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<
>
> The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn’t require study or discussion, and makes no mention of “improvement.” The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.
>
> >>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<
>
> I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.
>
> >>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<
>
> As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the

MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, … <<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their

voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then

> decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.
>
> Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.
>
> **Jonathan Golden, PhD**
>
> **Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting**
>
> **<image001.jpg>**

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 10:09:46 PM

Once again, I would like to apologize to Mr. Biernbaum and to Town Meeting for my conduct during his remarks on Article 30. I interrupted him in rude fashion and with a hostile tone. No one speaking at Town Meeting deserves to be treated in that fashion. My response to the point of privilege/point of order that was raised was also not properly civil. Mr. Biernbaum and everyone else in Town Meeting deserved better. None of this is to make an excuse but instead simply to promise to everyone that I will do better in the future whether the speaker is Mr. Biernbaum or anyone else. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12

Jonathan A. Karon
Karon Law, LLC
10 High Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 405-3200
jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM; jakaronlaw@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 10:38:34 PM

Hi Jon,

You are correct, gracious, and good. All three.
Thank you for your apology and your service!
John Bassett
p6

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 10:09:46 PM EDT, Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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> Jonathan A. Karon
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> (617) 405-3200
> jakaron@karonlaw.net
> www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM; jakaronlaw@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:02:50 PM

I should have added that Lee kept composed and handled it well.
John Bassett
p6

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 10:38:34 PM EDT, John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:

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>
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> >
> > Jonathan A. Karon
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> > (617) 405-3200
> > jakaron@karonlaw.net
> > www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: baswolfe@aol.com
Cc: Brookline TM; jakaronlaw@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 12:31:12 AM

Truly, irrevocably, awful.

Anthony Flint
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:02 PM John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I should have added that Lee kept composed and handled it well.
> John Bassett
> p6
>
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> > Jonathan A. Karon
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jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 12:50:47 AM

Jon,

It takes a big man to admit a mistake, especially in public. We all make mistakes, and learning from them is the best we can do. It sounds like your doing that, and you've made a genuine apology, not the kind of non-apology apology we hear all to often in politics. Good for you!

On 6/5/2025 10:09 PM, Jon Karon via groups.io wrote:

> Once again, I would like to apologize to Mr. Biernbaum and to Town Meeting for my conduct during his remarks on Article 30. I interrupted him in rude fashion and with a hostile tone. No one speaking at Town Meeting deserves to be treated in that fashion. My response to the point of privilege/point of order that was raised was also not properly civil. Mr. Biernbaum and everyone else in Town Meeting deserved better. None of this is to make an excuse but instead simply to promise to everyone that I will do better in the future whether the speaker is Mr. Biernbaum or anyone else. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12
>
> Jonathan A. Karon
> Karon Law, LLC
> 10 High Street, Suite 401
> Boston, MA 02110
> (617) 405-3200
> jakaron@karonlaw.net
> www.karonlaw.net

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear."
– *Harry S. Truman*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 12:50:52 AM

Jon,

It takes a big man to admit a mistake, especially in public. We all make mistakes, and learning from them is the best we can do. It sounds like your doing that, and you've made a genuine apology, not the kind of non-apology apology we hear all to often in politics. Good for you!

On 6/5/2025 10:09 PM, Jon Karon via groups.io wrote:

> Once again, I would like to apologize to Mr. Biernbaum and to Town Meeting for my conduct during his remarks on Article 30. I interrupted him in rude fashion and with a hostile tone. No one speaking at Town Meeting deserves to be treated in that fashion. My response to the point of privilege/point of order that was raised was also not properly civil. Mr. Biernbaum and everyone else in Town Meeting deserved better. None of this is to make an excuse but instead simply to promise to everyone that I will do better in the future whether the speaker is Mr. Biernbaum or anyone else. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12
>
> Jonathan A. Karon
> Karon Law, LLC
> 10 High Street, Suite 401
> Boston, MA 02110
> (617) 405-3200
> jakaron@karonlaw.net
> www.karonlaw.net

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17:22 AM

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

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> In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.
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call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.

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Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:28:21 AM

I think there is an inherent bias in the process, but I don't know whether it is deliberate. I think it's similar to the process that is common with recall elections, where the election of the successor to the person being recalled is held simultaneously, implying that the person will in fact get recalled. That was the process in California some time ago with the recall of Governor Gray Davis and simultaneous election of Arnold Schwarzenegger. And the even stranger recall election in Fall River, where Mayor Jasiel Correia was simultaneously recalled and re-elected.

On 6/5/2025 4:50 PM, Andrew Fischer via groups.io wrote:

> It is possible, perhaps even likely, that candidates would run who are running because they are open minded and would like to explore the ideas of ways to improve the efficiency of our town's governance, as Joe Ross suggests is a reasonable thing to do.
>
> That is what the charter commission process envisions, notwithstanding Jon Margolis' fears of an inherent bias in the process.
>
> The alternative is to keep appointing new study commissions that delay the beginning of a process that would actually do something, rather than just study again what we have already studied to death. Setting up another study committee only guarantees that we will never do anything to change what we have, a bris that prevents addressing flaws and updating dated procedures to address the demands of changing times. That is the real bias.
>
> Andrew Fischer
> Town Meeting Member
> Precinct 13
> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> 617-293-8304
>
> > On Jun 5, 2025, at 4:39 PM, Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I agree with J Margolis
> >
> > Jerry Tuckman TMM9
> >
> > > On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell

you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run.
One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable

thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid

appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current

system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee

chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

> The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.
>
> >>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<
>
> I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.
>
> >>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<
>
> As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, … <<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io

<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select

Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:50:48 AM

I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

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Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
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A. Joseph Ross
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 8:15:44 AM

Colleagues,

I agree as well that this should not be a binary choice. The good news is that the process does not need to be framed or conducted as a binary choice between city and town. Should the charter commission question reach the ballot, I imagine that candidates will take all kinds of positions about the future of our municipality. A well run charter commission will take into consideration multiple models of town government and city government before bringing a proposal to the voters. Most importantly, at every step of the process, Brookline voters will decide whether or not to proceed.

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Best wishes to all for a restful and restorative summer,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



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> **Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
> **To:** brooklinetmma@groups.io
> **Subject:** Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Arthur Conquest via groups.io <awcIII=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline PAX; Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Dr. Bob & AWCIII
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 8:17:30 AM

A brief summary of my meeting with Bob Weintraub Wednesday past at 10:00 A.M. while sitting on a bench on Brookline Reservoir. In short, it was a very good meeting with the two of us being candid, civil and optimistic.

I never let up for a nanosecond that having a Black Brookline parent on the Superintendent Search Committee that Bob presently chairs is of great importance and value; I returned to that point three times during our three hour meeting. I also threw in that there wasn't a Black presently on the School Committee, or the sub-committee that was reviewing the incident a couple of years back when 1800 Brookline H.S. students staged a walkout onto Greenough St and forced the Principal and two house masters -- all of whom were White – to apologize publicly for unfairly targeting Black students during at incident that involved White students as well.

Bob asserted that the search for an interim superintend had already begun and five candidates had already been interviewed. There will be a new search committee formed sooner v. later when a permanent superintendent will be hired and that he'd make certain my concern would be addressed.

He apologized again for losing his composure in the auditorium after Town Meeting.

Truth/Justice,

AWCIII

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] 2023 forum on forms of municipal government
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 9:06:15 AM

Colleagues:
In 2023, the BNA and LWV sponsored a forum at which representatives of the Collins Center at UMass Boston made a presentation on forms of municipal government in Massachusetts. It was a very thorough and informative presentation and I hope you will watch the video. I have included the link below as well as a link to the Collins Center.
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: joe@attorneyross.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 9:47:16 AM

Agreed. We should be looking to improve our current town governance rather than removing it and replacing it with more of a city-type governance.

Gerald M (Jerry) Tuckman - TMM9

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM; leroseman@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] 2023 forum on forms of municipal government
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 9:52:20 AM

Thank you, Linda. I attended the forum and found it both interesting and informative. Those Collins Center folks clearly know their stuff.

Kim Smith
TMM 6

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 09:06:15 AM EDT, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com; jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 10:26:29 AM

The problem--to me--is that the leading proponents of charter change have made it crystal-clear that they believe Brookline should become a city. We might, then, expect them to push for exactly the binary choice that Jonathan decries. And as those with the most money are likely to weigh in for the same outcome, a binary choice is all we are likely to see presented to voters, at least by those with the most resources to argue the case.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 08:15:43 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Eric McNulty via groups.io <ejmcnu=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 10:42:24 AM

Thanks to all for a robust debate here, in the WA and amendments, and in TM. This is an important issue, and I fear that people may think that a change in form will solve all problems. Spoiler alert: it won't. Having moved many times in my life, I have seen a range of city and town governments. None are perfect. Becoming a city will not suddenly make housing affordable, the tree canopy flourish, or our budget challenges disappear. Nor will remaining a town. At the end of the day, it will be we the people who determine whether our local government is responsive, effective, and efficient whatever the form.

Despite serious reservations about the structure and tone of the original WA30 (and fewer with the adjustments made by AC), I also had serious reservations about the output of the Moderator's Council. I appreciate the work of the MC and don't know any of the people well enough to pass judgement on allegations of bias. Therefore, I assume good intent. My objection is that the output was not particularly helpful in that nine reports are likely to be read by few (yes, I made at least a pass through all of them though only because I had to prep for TM). The "augmentation" I was hoping for in voting for the final WA30 motion was the synthesis of findings, highlights of point-counterpoint areas, and identification of areas that the MC did not, or chose not, to address. I was not looking for a different answer; I was hoping for better questions that need to be considered going forward.

The limitations of the charter commission process pointed out by Joslin Murphy are real. That's not the fault of anyone pro-city, pro-town, on the MC, etc. It is what it is. I hope that those limitations do not preclude or inhibit the debate over function that should inform the ultimate decision about form.

As to the value of TM, that is up to us. We just made progress reducing the town's carbon and waste footprint, we made a tough decision over trash collection, we reaffirmed our commitment to support the LGBTQIA+ community, and more. We TMMs need to actively share that with our constituents. We need to make sure that people understand what TM does. We can't expect them to read reports or show up to meetings -- most are too busy just managing life. If we can't communicate the benefits of what we do, we can't expect support to continue TM.

Thanks to all for four long though valuable evenings of active democracy.

Eric McNulty
TM P12

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Eileen Berger via groups.io <eileenberger33=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 11:16:20 AM

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Eileen Berger** <eileenberger33@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 11:13 AM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
To: <leroseman@gmail.com>

Thanks Joe and Lynda!
I agree that there should be a more nuanced approach to improving town meeting efficiency and effectiveness before consideration of a city government.(God forbid we should have a city council such as Boston, or Cambridge.) We must have collaborations that engender mutual respect and understanding between north and south brookline, support and financial equality for our firefighters, police and DPW, etc.and for the schools- solid stable executive leadership, financial transparency and oversight by the town, common sense, real equity for ALL students especially for the more vulnerable students with disabilities (over 20% of the school population), teacher shared leadership in curricular choices and school governance, and so much more from the school committee.
Much to do before a city government looms in our future and changes how we do everything.
Eileen Berger p15

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Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io>
To: ejmcnu@gmail.com
Cc: Lynda Roseman; joe@attorneyross.com; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 11:23:28 AM

Colleagues:
Charter commissions have done this work successfully under the constraints of the law countless times in cities and towns across Massachusetts. And, to be clear, charter commissions are independent bodies, not bound to any particular outcome. We can speculate all we want about what they will do, but until we see their eventual charter proposal, that's all we can do: speculate.

The city charter campaign began because a number of us who had long and broad experience in elected and appointed positions in town became convinced for different reasons that we needed a formal, serious look at whether a city form of government would better serve Brookline going forward. A Charter Commission process is the vehicle for that formal, serious look — one that must be asked for by the voters (15% of them, via inked signature) who agree that our form of government is not working as well as it could for everyone and would like a commission to consider what changes would strengthen it.

Could a Charter Commission propose a charter that keeps Brookline's Town form of government but with changes? Yes. Could they propose some form of city government? Yes. Will we as a community have months to compare their proposal with our current form on issues like cost, engagement and representation, authority and accountability? Yes. Will voters get the final say whether or not to accept or reject whatever is proposed? Yes.

Crucially: a vote on such a proposal, with the details we all need to see so that we can debate them rather than speculate, is a full three years from now.

There is clearly a lot of public education to be done about the nature of a charter commission process, which was ably and succinctly described last night by Paul Warren and mis-characterized in various ways by others. The charter campaign is committed over the course of the next many months to having several public forums about the charter commission process itself, how it works, how other towns/cities have used it, and what it might look like in Brookline.

Join us for the first of these discussions on Tuesday, June 24th at 6 pm at Hunneman Hall. All are welcome, and we hope to have an open Q&A format, not about what form of government might be best, but about what it means to move this conversation and debate to a formal charter commission.

I hope everyone has a restful weekend.

Rebecca Stone (she/her)
TMM Pct 3
Chair, Brookline City Charter Campaign

Learn more about Brookline's Precinct 3: https://sites.google.com/view/brooklinep3/home/

Learn more about the campaign for a Charter Commission: www.brooklinecitycharter.com

On Jun 6, 2025, at 10:42 AM, Eric McNulty via groups.io <ejmcnu=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Thanks to all for a robust debate here, in the WA and amendments, and in TM. This is an important issue, and I fear that people may think that a change in form will solve all problems. Spoiler alert: it won't. Having moved many times in my life, I have seen a range of city and town governments. None are perfect. Becoming a city will not suddenly make housing affordable, the tree canopy flourish, or our budget challenges disappear. Nor will remaining a town. At the end of the day, it will be we the people who determine whether our local government is responsive, effective, and efficient whatever the form.

Despite serious reservations about the structure and tone of the original WA30 (and fewer with the adjustments made by AC), I also had serious reservations about the output of the Moderator's Council. I appreciate the work of the MC and don't know any of the people well enough to pass judgement on allegations of bias. Therefore, I assume good intent. My objection is that the output was not particularly helpful in that nine reports are likely to be read by few (yes, I made at least a pass through all of them though only because I had to prep for TM). The "augmentation" I was hoping for in voting for the final WA30 motion was the synthesis of findings, highlights of point-counterpoint areas, and identification of areas that the MC did not, or chose not, to address. I was not looking for a different answer; I was hoping for better questions that need to be considered going forward.

The limitations of the charter commission process pointed out by Joslin Murphy are real. That's not the fault of anyone pro-city, pro-town, on the MC, etc. It is what it is. I hope that those limitations do not preclude or inhibit the debate over function that should inform the ultimate decision about form.

As to the value of TM, that is up to us. We just made progress reducing the town's carbon and waste footprint, we made a tough decision over trash collection, we reaffirmed our commitment to support the LGBTQIA+ community, and more. We TMMs need to actively share that with our constituents. We need to make sure that people understand what TM does. We can't expect them to read reports or show up to meetings -- most are too busy just managing life. If we can't communicate the benefits of what we do, we can't expect support to continue TM.

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Eric McNulty
TM P12

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Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
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To: ejmcnu@gmail.com
Cc: Lynda Roseman; joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 11:33:49 AM

Agreed. Well said. Thank you!

Matthew Caldeira
TMM-9

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025, 10:42 AM Eric McNulty via groups.io <ejmcnu=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Thanks to all for a robust debate here, in the WA and amendments, and in TM. This is an important issue, and I fear that people may think that a change in form will solve all problems. Spoiler alert: it won't. Having moved many times in my life, I have seen a range of city and town governments. None are perfect. Becoming a city will not suddenly make housing affordable, the tree canopy flourish, or our budget challenges disappear. Nor will remaining a town. At the end of the day, it will be we the people who determine whether our local government is responsive, effective, and efficient whatever the form.
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> be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents"; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like "the tradeoffs with each alternative"; and (3) for its management, "an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]
>
> --
> A. Joseph Ross
> Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA
>
> ===
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com
Cc: ejmcnu@gmail.com; Lynda Roseman; joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 12:03:05 PM

---

yes, well said Rebecca. Thank you for the calm clarity of your note.

-Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 11:33 AM Matthew Caldeira via groups.io <matthew.caldeira=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Agreed. Well said. Thank you!
>
> Matthew Caldeira
> TMM-9
>
> On Fri, Jun 6, 2025, 10:42 AM Eric McNulty via groups.io <ejmcnu=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Thanks to all for a robust debate here, in the WA and amendments, and in TM. This is an important issue, and I fear that people may think that a change in form will solve all problems. Spoiler alert: it won't. Having moved many times in my life, I have seen a range of city and town governments. None are perfect. Becoming a city will not suddenly make housing affordable, the tree canopy flourish, or our budget challenges disappear. Nor will remaining a town. At the end of the day, it will be we the people who determine whether our local government is responsive, effective, and efficient whatever the form.
> >
> > Despite serious reservations about the structure and tone of the original WA30 (and fewer with the adjustments made by AC), I also had serious reservations about the output of the Moderator's Council. I appreciate the work of the MC and don't know any of the people well enough to pass judgement on allegations of bias. Therefore, I assume good intent. My objection is that the output was not particularly helpful in that nine reports are likely to be read by few (yes, I made at least a pass through all of them though only because I had to prep for TM). The "augmentation" I was hoping for in voting for the final WA30 motion was the synthesis of findings, highlights of point-counterpoint areas, and identification of areas that the MC did not, or chose not, to address. I was not looking for a different answer; I was hoping for better questions that need to be considered going forward.
> >
> > The limitations of the charter commission process pointed out by Joslin Murphy are real. That's not the fault of anyone pro-city, pro-town, on the MC, etc. It is what it is. I hope that those limitations do not preclude or inhibit the debate over function that should inform the ultimate decision about form.
> >
> > As to the value of TM, that is up to us. We just made progress reducing the town's carbon and waste footprint, we made a tough decision over trash collection, we reaffirmed our commitment to support the LGBTQIA+ community, and more. We TMMs need to actively share that with our constituents. We need to make sure that people understand what TM does. We can't expect them to read reports or show up to meetings -- most are too busy just managing life. If we can't communicate the benefits of what we do, we can't expect support to continue TM.
> >
> > Thanks to all for four long though valuable evenings of active democracy.
> >
> > Eric McNulty
> > TM P12
> >
> > On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:50 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.

Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

On 6/5/2025 2:07 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io wrote:

> What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.
>
> How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?
>
> Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.
>
> Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am– not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.

In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.

No Action on WA30

It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.

I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.

As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He nonetheless completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

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Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: "Kevin MacKenzie"
Cc: "Brookline TM"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 12:15:30 PM

>> A colleague of ours cannot make it tonight and posted his remarks here. I find the decision to litigate this issue here in this way disappointing.<<

Litigating issues that are coming before Town Meeting is perhaps the primary purpose of this Listserv, and we are, individually and collectively, routinely chastised when we go astray from that well-stated purpose.

No one posting an opinion here is entitled to any sort of immunity from rebuttal.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: Kevin MacKenzie <kevin4brookline@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 6:29 PM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: jklein728@gmail.com; Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

It is regrettable that this thread has become what it is.

A colleague of ours cannot make it tonight and posted his remarks here.

I find the decision to litigate this issue here in this way disappointing. We do not conduct ourselves like this on the floor of Town Meeting - and we should not do so here prior to such a debate.

Who is persuaded by a (dare I say) toxic back and forth like this? Certainly not I.

Kevin MacKenzie
TMM P13

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 18:08 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >> Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."<<

My criticism of the MCFG has been about process, about bias, and about trying to pass off supposition as “research.”

As for the petitioner asking for a “do over,” the petitioner’s motion specifically used the word “augment.”

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Klein via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 12:44 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won’t get that far down the list, so here is my “two cents” worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don’t like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a “do over.”

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.
>
> -Mike Toffel, TMM8
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io

Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the**

pros of cities, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<
The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<
I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<
As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<
No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let

them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting
<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: ejmcnu@gmail.com; stonewalt@mac.com
Cc: Lynda Roseman; joe@attorneyross.com; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 12:31:38 PM

As Rebecca notes, the campaign she heads is a "city charter campaign." 'Nuff said.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 11:23:29 AM EDT, Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues:
Charter commissions have done this work successfully under the constraints of the law countless times in cities and towns across Massachusetts. And, to be clear, charter commissions are independent bodies, not bound to any particular outcome. We can speculate all we want about what they will do, but until we see their eventual charter proposal, that's all we can do: speculate.

The city charter campaign began because a number of us who had long and broad experience in elected and appointed positions in town became convinced for different reasons that we needed a formal, serious look at whether a city form of government would better serve Brookline going forward. A Charter Commission process is the vehicle for that formal, serious look — one that must be asked for by the voters (15% of them, via inked signature) who agree that our form of government is not working as well as it could for everyone and would like a commission to consider what changes would strengthen it.

Could a Charter Commission propose a charter that keeps Brookline's Town form of government but with changes? Yes. Could they propose some form of city government? Yes. Will we as a community have months to compare their proposal with our current form on issues like cost, engagement and representation, authority and accountability? Yes. Will voters get the final say whether or not to accept or reject whatever is proposed? Yes.

Crucially: a vote on such a proposal, with the details we all need to see so that we can debate them rather than speculate, is a full three years from now.

There is clearly a lot of public education to be done about the nature of a charter commission process, which was ably and succinctly described last night by Paul Warren and mis-characterized in various ways by others. The charter campaign is committed over the course of the next many months to having several public forums about the charter commission process itself, how it works, how other towns/cities have used it, and what it might look like in Brookline.

Join us for the first of these discussions on Tuesday, June 24th at 6 pm at Hunneman Hall. All are welcome, and we hope to have an open Q&A format, not about what form of government might be best, but about what it means to move this conversation and debate to a formal charter commission.

I hope everyone has a restful weekend.

Rebecca Stone (she/her)
TMM Pct 3
Chair, Brookline City Charter Campaign

Learn more about Brookline's Precinct 3: https://sites.google.com/view/brooklinep3/home/

Learn more about the campaign for a Charter Commission: www.brooklinecitycharter.com

> On Jun 6, 2025, at 10:42 AM, Eric McNulty via groups.io <ejmcnu=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Thanks to all for a robust debate here, in the WA and amendments, and in TM. This is an important issue, and I fear that people may think that a change in form will solve all problems. Spoiler alert: it won't. Having moved many times in my life, I have seen a range of city and town governments. None are perfect. Becoming a city will not suddenly make housing affordable, the tree canopy flourish, or our budget challenges disappear. Nor will remaining a town. At the end of the day, it will be we the people who determine whether our local government is responsive, effective, and efficient whatever the form.

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The limitations of the charter commission process pointed out by Joslin Murphy are real. That's not the fault of anyone pro-city, pro-town, on the MC, etc. It is what it is. I hope that those limitations do not preclude or inhibit the debate over function that should inform the ultimate decision about form.

As to the value of TM, that is up to us. We just made progress reducing the town's carbon and waste footprint, we made a tough decision over trash collection, we reaffirmed our commitment to support the LGBTQIA+ community, and more. We TMMs need to actively share that with our constituents. We need to make sure that people understand what TM does. We can't expect them to read reports or show up to meetings -- most are too busy just managing life. If we can't communicate the benefits of what we do, we can't expect support to continue TM.

Thanks to all for four long though valuable evenings of active democracy.

Eric McNulty
TM P12

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:50 AM Lynda Roseman

via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.
>
> Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

On 6/5/2025 2:07 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io wrote:

> What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.
>
> How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?
>
> Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.
>
> Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.
>
> On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am–not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.

In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.

No Action on WA30

It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.

I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.

As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He nonetheless completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with

a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his “Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process” is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what’s really called “research.” On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a “resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents”; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like “the tradeoffs with each alternative”; and (3) for its management, “an organization focused on local democratic renewal,” specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass’ Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG’s “Informational Documents” page.14]

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.”
– *Harry S. Truman*

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A. Joseph Ross
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– *Harry S. Truman*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lee Biernbaum via groups.io <lee=acrossb.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 12:51:02 PM

Thank you Jon for the immediate, after-the-moment apology, the personal one after Town Meeting, and this public one here. We all make mistakes in public, high-pressure situations and while we all certainly endeavor to avoid doing so, how we react to them when they inevitably occur says far more about our character.

May we all be as introspective and willing to admit and apologize for our public missteps as Jon has been.

Thanks,

Lee Biernbaum
TMM P9

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Susan Park via groups.io <susanforbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: lee@acrossb.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 12:56:04 PM

Thank you Jon for being a great role model with your apologies as well as Bonnie's apology via email last week.

Great job Mr. Moderator for an efficient TM.

Have a great summer all,
Susan Park
TMM17

On Fri, 6 Jun 2025 at 12:51 PM Lee Biernbaum via groups.io <lee=acrossb.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Thank you Jon for the immediate, after-the-moment apology, the personal one after Town Meeting, and this public one here. We all make mistakes in public, high-pressure situations and while we all certainly endeavor to avoid doing so, how we react to them when they inevitably occur says far more about our character.
>
> May we all be as introspective and willing to admit and apologize for our public missteps as Jon has been.
>
> Thanks,
>
> Lee Biernbaum
> TMM P9

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Matthew Caldeira via groups.io <matthew.caldeira=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	Judith Vanderkay
Cc:	hughjoseph@comcast.net; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Article 20-Ban sale of Foie Gras.
Date:	Friday, June 6, 2025 1:18:47 PM

Judith,
Not sure if it was the language i used that compelled you to respond as you did?...

"Takeover" ?

Not meant as a negative - as in a hostile take over or anything negative to reflect on Nina's lighting.

Trader Joes opened there in 1996. And I've been shopping there since late 96. Ive lived in CC neighborhood since 98. Whiskey Park prior.

It did not have the entire space it has now. To the best of my recollection it first shared that space with some lighting store (not sure if it was Nina's or some other name. Pretty sure it was Ninas); and they expanded 2x, eventually occupying the entire space on that 1st street level floor.

The point re: to WA 20 was businesses come and go due to many variables. Trader joes did well enough not only to stay in that location but to also expand. And I pointed out all the businesses that i have seen endure and remain & which ones are gone.

Banning the sale of one product is not going to have such adverse effects on a business that it closes unless that business only sells that one product. Not a sustainable business model. Lol.

I was unable to find any information about Nina's previous location before it moved into 1299 Beacon in 2006.
Nor could I find any info as to trader Joe's past expansion plans etc...

Nor do I care enough to spend more time on this subject to research more.

Maybe someone cares enough to do so or has similar memories and can corroborate?

Im thinking it would be more productive to have a discussion about which businesses can and would thrive here in Brookline (looking at the successful ones vs unsuccessful) as we look to the future and find ways to bring them here?

Thank you in advance for your consideration.
Kind regards,
Matthew Caldeira
TMM-9

On Wed, May 28, 2025, 3:26 PM Judith Vanderkay <jvanderkay@gmail.com> wrote:

Sorry, but Trader Joe's did not take over Nina's lighting store or that building. It is in a different building entirely.

I don't see how this relates to WA 20 or any other, but I wanted to set the record straight.

— Judith Vanderkay, TMM 9 and Library Trustee

On Wed, May 28, 2025 at 1:05 PM Matthew Caldeira via groups.io <matthew.caldeira=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Good day folks,
> i'd like to add my $0.02 in on this. i didn't sleep much last night; had bad dreams of wood & bark puns
> so please forgive any typos, grammaah, or scattered thoughts etc...
>
> i'm new to TM. i live in P09. i've lived in Brookline for close to 30 years now. have seen so many businesses come and go. Tam in wash square - moved into Matt Garret's spot in CC, then Zathmary's - probably several more biz's in that spot after Zath's moved into that spot when TAM closed. (jazz brunch at TAM wash sq was wonderful.)
>
> Captain's Warf was right around the corner (then and imaging place, now some healthcare office of sorts)
> Wulfs Seafood further up on harvard st. (miss that guy)
>
> watched Trader Joes start as a closet sized store, then continually expanding, eventually taking over all of Nina's lighting and the entire first floor of that building....
>
> anyway there are so many variables to factor in as to why businesses succeed and fail. "location, location, location" used to be the number one reason, but think now it's inability to adapt to change /lack of innovation bla bla bla...
>
> La Voile has been there for as long as i can remember - so many restaurants have succumbed to covid pandemic - some quickly, some stuck it out only to close years later due to rising costs - some (still closing now and will most likely close this year for reasons attached to covid); challenges to find workers in that industry, less customers eating out (delivery services soaring and more apps for these services), dietary changes (more vegans sprouting up)....
>
> banning the sale of froie gras would not have necessarily been a causing factor - as they've already shut down, and looking at there menu, only noticed 2 items on the menu are FG.
> demographics have shifted since their successful days, and there core customers have most likely moved on. tacos, tapas and tofu (oh my) seems to be popular....
>
> those who are against the ban have concerns about over regulation discouraging businesses from coming to brookline and therefore potentially opportunity cost for commerce/revenue etc...
> do we want to open up to businesses that use unethical business practices etc...?
>
> it's a delicacy - i.e. a luxury product; not a necessity - like chicken or beef (to feed that masses that depend on these sources of protein); im not happy to support these industries (as someone mentioned about beef, chicken and pork slaughter houses) but i don't feel i can do anything about it. except change my diet (which i am slooowly working on); sign petitions, calls and emails to government folks...
>
> other than unethical / cruelty - force feeding there's
> - potential to spread disease (from the dead birds still in cages)
> https://weanimals.org/project/inside-the-foie-gras-industry/

there are producers of frog grass that does not use the gravage method of force feeding (Spain, Germany, California, and New York all have producers...)

https://www.foie-royale.com/

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/18/the-farmer-who-makes-ethical-foie-gras

sure cost is higher, but again, it's a luxury item.

Marky's - looked into them. started in Florida, have 2 or 3 locations in FL and another 3 or 4 in NY. they'll be ok. and they carry an array of other products.
i'm curious as to why they chose CC as their "new to Boston" location and not seaport boston or newbury st.

even if banning it doesn't pass. as someone mentioned the low percentage on consumption - will they be able to sustain there business in current location? i get the sense that there may not be enough customers in the area to drive their business?

concerns about policing if ban happens; as with the ABCC - there's not enough resources for them to cover every business with a liquor license - it's the fear of receiving a heavy fine or getting shut down that keeps the majority obedient.

questions i have:
if ban does pass, will it be effective immediately or will there be a grace period for stores to run thru their existing inventory? and simple be told not to purchase any new inventory of banned products?

do we vet new businesses that want to open in brookline? (to ensure the basics on ethical business practices etc..)
do we actively seek businesses and reach out to them with incentives to come to brookline?

lastly i applaud the young folks (in HS) that have worked on this. with the younger generations growing up with so many screens and services for "convenience" (i.e. everything being delivered) there's a disconnect with nature and the environment (check out book - "Last Child in the Woods")

looking forward to hearing constructive and professional perspectives on this topic. thank you!

*please be kind and rewind - remember i'm new to TM. so i'm learning as i go... i know there is a town website that probably has all the answers etc... will eventually find the time to journey thru it.

thank you!
kind regards,
matthew caldeira TMM-9

On Wed, May 28, 2025 at 10:12 AM Hugh Joseph via groups.io <hughjoseph=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:

> Good Day 2, everyone!
>
> After the prolonged, but fascinating (IMO) discussion last night on outsourcing waste collection, we are faced with a long agenda tonight and probably more lengthy debates. One of the items on the docket, towards the beginning, is **Article 20-Ban sale of Foie Gras.** Given the prior postings on this online, this is likely to spur an equally lengthy exchange if allowed; already 17 people have signed up to speak on it. I did not.

Let’s compare this issue to waste collection. Last night, we went well over an hour before cutting off debate. But both waste collection staff as well as a large contingent from DPW showed up for the entire evening and played a convincing role in determining the outcome. We got out around 11:15 PM - but it was well worth playing this out.

On the other hand, we could similarly go an hour or more on foie gras tonight. But instead of addressing an issue that affects every one of us every week, this is of negligible concern. Average per person US foie gras consumption in the US Is .0000084 percent of overall meat consumption. It’s so minuscule, it never shows up in dietary data. I wonder if any TMMs even eat foie gras, especially sourced in Brookline. Do we really want to spend an hour plus on this?

I am not a fan of foie gras, but I am also not a fan of unnecessarily long meetings with virtually no impact on our diets and on Brookline. By focusing solely on this product, we are ignoring the 99.9999 percent of industrially-raised meat that I assume a large share of us will have consumed before coming tonight and most other days of the week. Let me assure you - all of its production is just as bad, if not worse, than what these ducks and geese go through. I posted earlier on this so I won't rehash the details. But the impact of this Article, one way or the other, will be negligible, other than for the few residents here who do consume it, and, if passed, for the added enforcement needed by Town officials.

Personally, I’d much prefer an extra hour of sleep tonight, or at least to allocate debate time to issues of greater concern and impact on tonight's agenda.

My request: The kids who worked on this deserve to be heard. Let them make their case, and allow a comment on each side. After that, I’d like to call for a vote in the interests of time and priorities, and move along to the myriad other items that follow.

I encourage other TMMs to support this for the same reasons.

Thanks,

Hugh Joseph
(TM15)

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Shanna Giora-Gorfajn via groups.io <s.giora=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jakaronlaw@gmail.com
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:51:02 PM

Mr. Assistant Moderator,

Thank you for this thoughtful follow-up and sincere apology. I was also very happy to see you speaking privately with my colleague Lee Biernbaum as many of us were filing out of the auditorium last night.

I acknowledge that my point of personal privilege may not have been procedurally correct. In an effort to preserve a colleague's opportunity to present his remarks, I chose the course of action that seemed most likely to be effective in a time-sensitive situation.

I would welcome guidance from you or Moderator Wishinsky, either privately or on this listserv (for our collective benefit), as to the recommended/proper procedural action in this situation.

Thanks,
Shanna Giora-Gorfajn, TMM-11

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025, 22:09 Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Once again, I would like to apologize to Mr. Biernbaum and to Town Meeting for my conduct during his remarks on Article 30. I interrupted him in rude fashion and with a hostile tone. No one speaking at Town Meeting deserves to be treated in that fashion. My response to the point of privilege/point of order that was raised was also not properly civil. Mr. Biernbaum and everyone else in Town Meeting deserved better. None of this is to make an excuse but instead simply to promise to everyone that I will do better in the future whether the speaker is Mr. Biernbaum or anyone else. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12
>
> Jonathan A. Karon
> Karon Law, LLC
> 10 High Street, Suite 401
> Boston, MA 02110
> (617) 405-3200
> jakaron@karonlaw.net
> www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io; joe@attorneyross.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 3:43:05 PM

Joe et al:

The important factor that this discussion does not take into account is that, in the usual charter commission election, the candidates for commission membership typically run for that office in groups that identify themselves with one form of government or another. In Brookline you would probably have a group running as advocates for a change to some form of city government and another group running as advocates for a continuation of the representative town meeting in some form. So the initial election of one group or another will almost certainly determine the type of charter that the commission will ultimately put before the voters. That might not necessarily be a bad thing, but it does put the cart before the horse in that the voters determine the final result, at least in general, before the voter education process that the appointment of a charter commission is supposed to produce.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:28 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

I think there is an inherent bias in the process, but I don't know whether it is deliberate. I think it's similar to the process that is common with recall elections, where the election of the successor to the person being recalled is held simultaneously, implying that the person will in fact get recalled. That was the process in California some time ago with the recall of Governor Gray Davis and simultaneous election of Arnold Schwarzenegger. And the even stranger recall election in Fall River, where Mayor Jasiel Correia was simultaneously recalled and re-elected.

On 6/5/2025 4:50 PM, Andrew Fischer via groups.io wrote:

> It is possible, perhaps even likely, that candidates would run who are running because they are open minded and would like to explore the ideas of ways to improve the efficiency of our town's governance, as Joe Ross suggests is a reasonable thing to do.
>
> That is what the charter commission process envisions, notwithstanding Jon Margolis' fears of an inherent bias in the process.
>
> The alternative is to keep appointing new study commissions that delay the

beginning of a process that would actually do something, rather than just study again what we have already studied to death. Setting up another study committee only guarantees that we will never do anything to change what we have, a bris that prevents addressing flaws and updating dated procedures to address the demands of changing times. That is the real bias.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 4:39 PM, Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I agree with J Margolis
>
> Jerry Tuckman TMM9
>
> > On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.
> >
> > The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.
> >
> > The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need

to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far

down the list, so here is my “two cents” worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don’t like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a “do over.”

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run.
> One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as

this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of

the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM

<brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various

> forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."
>
> >>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<
> The formal structure you refer to

[*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<
I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<
As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …

<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan

Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason

to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for

a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting
<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear."
– *Harry S. Truman*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Anthony Buono; Brookline TMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] WA28: Save or Democracy
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 4:06:41 PM

Anthony, thanks so much for sharing your powerful statement—if the question hadn't been called, you would have been a tough act to follow!

After the meeting, someone asked me what I would have said. I'd planned to respond to the Advisory Committee's question to petitioners about "the ask" of the resolution by pointing out that many people are already taking action—joining peaceful local protests and events in support of the Constitution, the rule of law, and democracy. Here are just a few examples:

- Brookline Pax's Saturday standouts at 11 am in Coolidge Corner
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I would've also suggested people check out Indivisible.org or FiftyFifty.One—or just reach out to me directly if they want to get involved.

I'd planned to end by inviting my fellow Town Meeting Members to support Article 28. And while I know some questioned whether this resolution was really "Brookline business", given that we have urgent local challenges to address. I respectfully disagree and believe that we can do both. Issues like protecting democracy and defending the rule of law are deeply relevant to our work. What happens nationally affects us here—and we have both the right and the responsibility to speak up.

That said… maybe it's for the best I didn't get the mic—Anthony would've been a tough act to follow!

Kim Smith
TMM 6

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 08:40:14 PM EDT, Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Hello Fellow Town Meeting Members,

I am proud to live in a community that voted so overwhelmingly to approve WA28.

I did not get the chance to give my speech tonight, but wanted to provide you all with the remarks I prepared.

In just the first few months since the Trump administration came to power, it has completely undermined our constitutional order.

He refuses to enforce laws passed by Congress.

He attacks independent agencies.

Threatens judges.

Ignores court rulings.

His deputy chief of staff has even called for the end of habeas corpus.

I rise today not just to list grievances, but to remind us of who we are—and what this meeting represents.

Yes, Town Meeting often feels routine. We fund schools, fix roads, support the vulnerable.

But every time we gather in this room, we do something quietly radical: we defy the historical norm of tyranny.

For most of human history, kings and emperors ruled. Ordinary people had no say.

But here in Massachusetts, we changed that. When the British Crown grew too heavy, towns like Brookline rose up. Ordinary people claimed power. And we've inherited it.

Our union was born flawed, scarred by the original sin of slavery, but in 1850, when Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act, Massachusetts town meetings pushed back.

Marshfield passed a resolution declaring:

"Until we are prepared to repudiate the principles of Independence and abjure all our ideas of justice and humanity, of truth and duty, we can be under no voluntary obedience to this act."

They didn't nullify federal law. They did something stronger: they reminded people of their moral compass.

I stand with those patriots.

This resolution calls on us to dissent—not with violence, but with clarity and

courage.

In 2017, Yale historian Timothy Snyder wrote *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century.* One of those lessons was Rule #19:

"Be a patriot. Set a good example of what America means for the generations to come. They will need it."

Patriotism is not loving your country no matter what. It's loving the idea of what your country can be—and fighting tirelessly for that vision.

When our posterity studies this moment—with an administration gone rogue and oligarchs winning the class war—they will ask what we did.

With this resolution, we make it clear: we did not accept, we did not concede, we did not stand idly by.

Just as I turned to our ancestors for guidance, future generations will look to us.

Let them find a town that stood for the good society, where all can thrive—and where the vulnerable were protected.

So Let's speak now, in our own front yard, and make our Voices, combined with the voices of other towns and cities across America, loud enough that the White House trembles with the echo of our conviction.

That is the point of this article.

And that is why I proudly support it.

Thank you, and may God bless Brookline, and may God bless America.

Solidarity,
Anthony Buono TMM 9

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Shanna T. Giora-Gorfajn
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 4:23:17 PM

I believe Moderator Wishinsky will be offering guidance on this in the near future. In the meantime, I would like to thank you for asking me to examine my actions and my apology also extends to you.
Jon Karon Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12

Jonathan A. Karon
Karon Law, LLC
10 High Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 405-3200
jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 2:50 PM Shanna T. Giora-Gorfajn <s.giora@gmail.com> wrote:

> Mr. Assistant Moderator,
>
> Thank you for this thoughtful follow-up and sincere apology. I was also very happy to see you speaking privately with my colleague Lee Biernbaum as many of us were filing out of the auditorium last night.
>
> I acknowledge that my point of personal privilege may not have been procedurally correct. In an effort to preserve a colleague's opportunity to present his remarks, I chose the course of action that seemed most likely to be effective in a time-sensitive situation.
>
> I would welcome guidance from you or Moderator Wishinsky, either privately or on this listserv (for our collective benefit), as to the recommended/proper procedural action in this situation.
>
> Thanks,
> Shanna Giora-Gorfajn, TMM-11

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025, 22:09 Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> > Once again, I would like to apologize to Mr. Biernbaum and to Town Meeting for my conduct during his remarks on Article 30. I interrupted him in rude fashion and with a hostile tone. No one speaking at Town Meeting deserves to be treated in that fashion. My response to the point of privilege/point of order that was raised was also not properly civil. Mr. Biernbaum and everyone else in Town Meeting deserved better. None of this is to make an excuse but instead simply to promise to everyone that I will do better in the future whether the speaker is Mr. Biernbaum or anyone else. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12
> >
> > Jonathan A. Karon

Karon Law, LLC
10 High Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 405-3200
jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Kim Smith
Cc: Anthony Buono; Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WA28: Save or Democracy
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 4:24:35 PM

I encourage anyone interested in taking action in Brookline with other Brookliners to "save our democracy" to check out Brookline's Activist Evenings (formerly Activist Mondays), which is our local Indivisible Group. They met every week during the election season at the United Parish, and now meet less often, but maintain an excellent list of opportunities to take action. You can find out more about them here.

Best,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 6, 2025, at 4:06 PM, Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony, thanks so much for sharing your powerful statement—if the question hadn't been called, you would have been a tough act to follow!
>
> After the meeting, someone asked me what I would have said. I'd planned to respond to the Advisory Committee's question to petitioners about "the ask" of the resolution by pointing out that many people are already taking action—joining peaceful local protests and events in support of the Constitution, the rule of law, and democracy. Here are just a few examples:
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>
> I would've also suggested people check out Indivisible.org or FiftyFifty.One—or just reach out to me directly if they want to get involved.

I'd planned to end by inviting my fellow Town Meeting Members to support Article 28. And while I know some questioned whether this resolution was really "Brookline business", given that we have urgent local challenges to address. I respectfully disagree and believe that we can do both. Issues like protecting democracy and defending the rule of law are deeply relevant to our work. What happens nationally affects us here—and we have both the right and the responsibility to speak up.

That said… maybe it's for the best I didn't get the mic—Anthony would've been a tough act to follow!

Kim Smith
TMM 6

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Marshfield passed a resolution declaring:

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> And that is why I proudly support it.
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> Thank you, and may God bless Brookline, and may God bless America.
>
> Solidarity,
> Anthony Buono TMM 9

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Klein
Cc: Anthony Buono; Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WA28: Save or Democracy
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 4:26:24 PM

Thank you, Jonathan.

Yes, I should have put in a plug for Activist Evenings. They are terrific.

Kim

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 04:24:34 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

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To: KSmith1450@aol.com
Cc: Jonathan Klein; Anthony Buono; Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WA28: Save or Democracy
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 4:52:31 PM

Thanks Kim!
Just a heads up that the 2025 Boston Photographers Press Association exhibit is at 775 Comm Ave. (Outdoors- you can walk through) by BU only tonight before it moves tomorrow to City Hall Plaza until 6/23/25. Take a stroll over to BU and enjoy! It's a great exhibit with awesome photos for the public.

Have a good weekend,

Susan Park
TMM17

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I stand with those patriots.

This resolution calls on us to dissent—not with violence, but with clarity and courage.

In 2017, Yale historian Timothy Snyder wrote *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century.* One of those lessons was Rule #19:

"Be a patriot. Set a good example of what America means for the generations to come. They will need it."

Patriotism is not loving your country no matter what. It's loving the idea of what your country can be—and fighting tirelessly for that vision.

When our posterity studies this moment—with an administration gone rogue and oligarchs winning the class war—they will ask what we did.

With this resolution, we make it clear: we did not accept, we did not concede, we did not stand idly by.

Just as I turned to our ancestors for guidance, future generations will look to us.

Let them find a town that stood for the good society, where all can thrive—and where the vulnerable were protected.

So Let's speak now, in our own front yard, and make our Voices, combined with the voices of other towns and cities across America, loud enough that the White House trembles with the echo of our conviction.

That is the point of this article.

And that is why I proudly support it.

Thank you, and may God bless Brookline, and may God bless America.

Solidarity,
Anthony Buono TMM 9

Groups.io Links:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Ben Birnbaum via groups.io <benbirnbaum18=icloud.com@groups.io>
To: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io; joe@attorneyross.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 4:52:33 PM

Well said, and true as true can be, Sandy. But when it comes to the ballot—whether it offers up referendums, propositions, initiatives or dog catchers—when have voters not for the most part run the cart ahead of the horse? Whole industries have been founded on the assumption that the cart makes the real difference. (I think you and I are old enough to remember "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too.") And the developers of these cart adornments have thrived. I can't recall if the commendable Brookline News is selling shares, but I intend to look into a possible investment—TrumpCoins, of course—next winter. (Or maybe MuskCoins; we'll see.)

Ben

> On Jun 6, 2025, at 3:43 PM, Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Joe et al:
>
> The important factor that this discussion does not take into account is that, in the usual charter commission election, the candidates for commission membership typically run for that office in groups that identify themselves with one form of government or another. In Brookline you would probably have a group running as advocates for a change to some form of city government and another group running as advocates for a continuation of the representative town meeting in some form. So the initial election of one group or another will almost certainly determine the type of charter that the commission will ultimately put before the voters. That might not necessarily be a bad thing, but it does put the cart before the horse in that the voters determine the final result, at least in general, before the voter education process that the appointment of a charter commission is supposed to produce.
>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 2:28 AM
> **To:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Subject:** Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
>
> I think there is an inherent bias in the process, but I don't know whether it is deliberate. I think it's similar to the process that is common with recall elections, where the election of the successor to the person being recalled is held simultaneously, implying that the person will in fact get recalled. That was the process in California some time ago with the recall of Governor Gray Davis and simultaneous election of Arnold Schwarzenegger. And the even stranger recall election in Fall River, where Mayor Jasiel Correia was simultaneously recalled and re-elected.
>
> On 6/5/2025 4:50 PM, Andrew Fischer via groups.io wrote:
>
> > It is possible, perhaps even likely, that candidates would run who are running because they are open minded and would like to explore the ideas of ways to improve the efficiency of our town's governance, as Joe Ross suggests is a reasonable thing to do.
> >
> > That is what the charter commission process envisions, notwithstanding Jon Margolis' fears of an inherent bias in the process.
> >
> > The alternative is to keep appointing new study commissions that delay the beginning of a process that would actually do something, rather than just study again what we have already studied to death. Setting up another study committee only guarantees that we will never do anything to change what we have, a bris that prevents addressing flaws and updating dated procedures to address the demands of changing times. That is the real bias.
> >
> > Andrew Fischer
> > Town Meeting Member
> > Precinct 13
> > andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> > 617-293-8304
> >
> > > On Jun 5, 2025, at 4:39 PM, Gerald Tuckman via groups.io <gtuckman=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > I agree with J Margolis
> > >
> > > Jerry Tuckman TMM9
> > >
> > > > On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
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>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.
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> But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted

appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.
>
> -Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively**and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<
The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<
I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<
As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated bycitizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<
No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be

doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting
<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear."
– *Harry S. Truman*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Margolis; Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 5:39:32 PM

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.

- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
  - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
  - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
  - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental

reforms.

- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

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Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

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Regina Frawley 16

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-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
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> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
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> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little

discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the

30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this

Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Michael A. Burstein via groups.io <TMMBurstein=mabfan.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Points of Order and Questions of Privilege
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 6:04:33 PM

Folks,

A few people have been wondering about points of order and questions of privilege. As someone who is interested in parliamentary procedures, I provide the following. It should help when we meet again, as you can make sure your point or question is a valid one.

The below is from the November 2024 Brookline Town Meeting Handbook:

8.4.6 Privileged Motions

Special rules apply to privileged motions, consisting of points of order and questions of privilege. At an in-person meeting, the person raising such an objection stands and makes the motion. Remote attendees will inform the Chat Monitor that he or she wishes to raise a point or order or question of privilege. These are the only motions that the Moderator will immediately recognize and permit to interrupt a speaker. Once recognized, the Town Meeting Member should state, “I rise to a point of order [or question of privilege]” and then explain the basis for the objection. After a point of order or question of privilege is raised, the Moderator decides how to address it. The Moderator’s decision is final and may not be debated or appealed. A further description of these motions follows.

Points of Order
• A point of order is a question of the legality or propriety of the proceedings.
• If a Town Meeting Member feels that someone has the floor improperly, or that a motion or discussion is not within the purview of an article, the Member may rise, interrupt the speaker, and address the Moderator saying, "I rise to a point of order." After being recognized, the Town Meeting Member states the point of order.
• The Moderator makes a ruling on the point of order.
• A point of order must be raised promptly when the problem arises.
• The Moderator will not permit such a motion as a means of altering an announced vote, except under extraordinary circumstances.
• A point of order may not be used to present a counterargument or to contest a matter of fact. The Moderator will not allow points of order to circumvent those waiting in queue to speak.

Questions of Privilege
• A question of privilege relates to the rights and privileges of the meeting collectively, its safety or dignity, or the integrity of its proceedings.
• For example, a question of privilege would be in order if the windows are open and admitting rain, if the sound system is not functioning properly or if one or more Town Meeting Members are engaged in disruptive or derogatory conduct.
• A question of privilege may also relate to the rights, reputation and conduct of a particular Town Meeting Member as an individual or as a Town Meeting Member. For example, if a speaker speaks in derogatory terms of another person, the person attacked, or any other person, may raise a question of privilege.
• If a Town Meeting Member feels a Question of Privilege should be called, the Member may rise, interrupt the speaker if necessary, and address the Moderator saying, " I rise to a question

of privilege." After being recognized, the Town Meeting Member states the issue. A question of privilege is not a motion and does not require a second. In virtually no instance will the Moderator permit it to be debated.

--
Michael A. Burstein
Brookline Library Trustee and Town Meeting Member (Precinct 12)
Pronouns: He/Him/His
TMMBurstein@mabfan.com

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Shanna Giora-Gorfajn via groups.io <s.giora=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Karon
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] My apologies
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 6:18:49 PM

No thanks necessary, and I appreciate this communal reflection.

(And, of course, apology accepted!)

Wishing all of you a wonderful weekend,
Shanna Giora-Gorfajn TMM-11

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025, 16:23 Jonathan Karon <jakaronlaw@gmail.com> wrote:

> I believe Moderator Wishinsky will be offering guidance on this in the near future. In the meantime, I would like to thank you for asking me to examine my actions and my apology also extends to you.
> Jon Karon Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12
>
> Jonathan A. Karon
> Karon Law, LLC
> 10 High Street, Suite 401
> Boston, MA 02110
> (617) 405-3200
> jakaron@karonlaw.net
> www.karonlaw.net
>
> On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 2:50 PM Shanna T. Giora-Gorfajn <s.giora@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> > Mr. Assistant Moderator,
> >
> > Thank you for this thoughtful follow-up and sincere apology. I was also very happy to see you speaking privately with my colleague Lee Biernbaum as many of us were filing out of the auditorium last night.
> >
> > I acknowledge that my point of personal privilege may not have been procedurally correct. In an effort to preserve a colleague's opportunity to present his remarks, I chose the course of action that seemed most likely to be effective in a time-sensitive situation.
> >
> > I would welcome guidance from you or Moderator Wishinsky, either privately or on this listserv (for our collective benefit), as to the recommended/proper procedural action in this situation.
> >
> > Thanks,
> > Shanna Giora-Gorfajn, TMM-11
> >
> > On Thu, Jun 5, 2025, 22:09 Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > > Once again, I would like to apologize to Mr. Biernbaum and to Town Meeting for my conduct during his remarks on Article 30. I interrupted him in rude fashion and with a

> > hostile tone. No one speaking at Town Meeting deserves to be treated in that fashion. My response to the point of privilege/point of order that was raised was also not properly civil. Mr. Biernbaum and everyone else in Town Meeting deserved better. None of this is to make an excuse but instead simply to promise to everyone that I will do better in the future whether the speaker is Mr. Biernbaum or anyone else. Jon Karon, Assistant Town Moderator and TMM 12
>
> Jonathan A. Karon
> Karon Law, LLC
> 10 High Street, Suite 401
> Boston, MA 02110
> (617) 405-3200
> jakaron@karonlaw.net
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:39:44 PM

First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.

Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.

Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in

Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

---

South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to

have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings

was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

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Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

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The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for

itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

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>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

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>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And

heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's

committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Wishinsky via groups.io <nwishinsky=brooklinema.gov@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups io; TMMBurstein@mabfan.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Points of Order and Questions of Privilege
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:49:36 PM

Well, Michael stole my thunder. I rewatched the interaction and applying the guidance in the Town Meeting Members Handbook, I think you can make arguments for Shanna's points as either a Point of Order or Question of Privilege. It might be closer to a point of order but that doesn't matter in my mind. I think what Shanna did was appropriate under the circumstances.

I will say that I am glad Jon apologized. Moderating is difficult and you never really know how difficult until you are actually doing it. And moderating a controversial topic is especially difficult. As moderator, you are reacting in real time to situations where emotions may be running high, in front of a large audience, the press and a live stream that will live forever. Learn and move on.

Neil Wishinsky
Brookline Town Moderator

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Michael A. Burstein via groups.io <TMMBurstein=mabfan.com@groups.io>
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 6:04 PM
To: brooklinetmma@groups io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Points of Order and Questions of Privilege

Folks,

A few people have been wondering about points of order and questions of privilege. As someone who is interested in parliamentary procedures, I provide the following. It should help when we meet again, as you can make sure your point or question is a valid one.

The below is from the November 2024 Brookline Town Meeting Handbook:

8.4.6 Privileged Motions

Special rules apply to privileged motions, consisting of points of order and questions of privilege. At an in-person meeting, the person raising such an objection stands and makes the motion. Remote attendees will inform the Chat Monitor that he or she wishes to raise a point or order or question of privilege. These are the only motions that the Moderator will immediately recognize and permit to interrupt a speaker. Once recognized, the Town Meeting Member should state, "I rise to a point of order [or question of privilege]" and then explain the basis for the objection. After a point of order or question of privilege is raised, the Moderator decides how to address it. The Moderator's decision is final and may not be debated or appealed. A further description of these motions follows.

Points of Order

• A point of order is a question of the legality or propriety of the proceedings.
• If a Town Meeting Member feels that someone has the floor improperly, or that a motion or discussion is not within the purview of an article, the Member may rise, interrupt the speaker, and address the Moderator saying, "I rise to a point of order." After being recognized, the Town Meeting Member states the point of order.
• The Moderator makes a ruling on the point of order.
• A point of order must be raised promptly when the problem arises.
• The Moderator will not permit such a motion as a means of altering an announced vote, except under extraordinary circumstances.
• A point of order may not be used to present a counterargument or to contest a matter of fact. The Moderator will not allow points of order to circumvent those waiting in queue to speak.

Questions of Privilege
• A question of privilege relates to the rights and privileges of the meeting collectively, its safety or dignity, or the integrity of its proceedings.
• For example, a question of privilege would be in order if the windows are open and admitting rain, if the sound system is not functioning properly or if one or more Town Meeting Members are engaged in disruptive or derogatory conduct.
• A question of privilege may also relate to the rights, reputation and conduct of a particular Town Meeting Member as an individual or as a Town Meeting Member. For example, if a speaker speaks in derogatory terms of another person, the person attacked, or any other person, may raise a question of privilege.
• If a Town Meeting Member feels a Question of Privilege should be called, the Member may rise, interrupt the speaker if necessary, and address the Moderator saying, " I rise to a question of privilege." After being recognized, the Town Meeting Member states the issue. A question of privilege is not a motion and does not require a second. In virtually no instance will the Moderator permit it to be debated.

--
Michael A. Burstein
Brookline Library Trustee and Town Meeting Member (Precinct 12)
Pronouns: He/Him/His
TMMBurstein@mabfan.com

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] [CAUTION] This email originated from a sender outside of the Town of Brookline mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marion Freedman-Gurspan via groups.io <freedgur=aol.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:50:07 PM

Framingham was considering becoming a city as far back as 1977 or 1978. I was teaching at BU and one of my students wrote a paper about it. I Framingham voted 4 times against becoming a city, in 1993, 1997, 2013 and one other year, before voting yes in 2017. The city is now having significant political issues and it behooves us to pay close attention so that we can learn from their missteps.
Marion Freedman-Gurspan TMM09

Sent from AOL on Android

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io>
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 6, 2025 9:38:31 PM

Jon,
You are mistaken about Newton and Jonathan Klein is correct. After a robust charter commission process initiated by the Newton League of Women Voters who had recommended the change, the proposal from the commission to reduce the size and change the electoral parameters for city council members failed with the voters. Folks in Newton are still arguing about why, but the result was as reported.

Rebecca Stone
TMM 3
(from my phone, so the usual apologies apply)
Join the Brookline charter conversation: www.brooklinecitycharter.com

> On Jun 6, 2025, at 7:39 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's

governmental structure.

- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
  - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
  - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
  - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
> Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.
>
> The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of

charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee

was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from

observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in

Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, “to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting.” For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as “research,” was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for “substantial” work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the Moderator’s Committee.”

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn’t require study or discussion, and makes no mention of “improvement.” The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the

Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most

intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: freedgur@aol.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 9:25:36 AM

Thank you. Could you give some specifics of pros and cons?

Regina Frawley16

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:50 PM Marion Freedman-Gurspan via groups.io <freedgur=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Framingham was considering becoming a city as far back as 1977 or 1978. I was teaching at BU and one of my students wrote a paper about it. I Framingham voted 4 times against becoming a city, in 1993, 1997, 2013 and one other year, before voting yes in 2017. The city is now having significant political issues and it behooves us to pay close attention so that we can learn from their missteps.
> Marion Freedman-Gurspan TMM09
>
> Sent from AOL on Android

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Robert Schoen via groups.io <robschoen.robschoen=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] App for organizing TMM votes spreadsheet data
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 9:25:53 AM
Attachments: brooklineTMM_voteTracker.html
inline.0.part
inline.1.part

Yesterday, Ben Kaufman sent out the spreadsheet with all the TMM votes for the May 2025 Town Meeting. Using AI, I was able to quickly create an app that takes the data from the spreadsheet and organizes it into two (hopefully) useful views.

"View by Vote" shows who voted Yes/No/Abstain/NoVote on for each vote. There is a dropdown menu containing all the votes that were taken. They are in the order that they were voted on. The TMMs under each vote type can be sorted by precinct and then by last name, or just by last name.

"View by Member" shows the votes cast by each individual TMM. The dropdown menu of TMMs can be sorted by precinct and then by last name, or just by last name (easier to find someone specific).

To use this app, you just need to **download the spreadsheet Ben emailed yesterday ("May 2025 Night 1-4 Votes.xlsx") to your computer or mobile device**. Do not rename it. Then go to this URL: https://tinyurl.com/TMMvotes

This links to an app hosted by Claude.AI (no account required). You will be prompted to "Load Excel File". Click that button and select the spreadsheet, wherever you saved it on your device. If the file loaded correctly, you should see what is displayed in Screenshot #1 and can use the app. I tested it on Mac, Windows, iPhone, and iPad. You may need to adjust the width of your browser window to display everything.

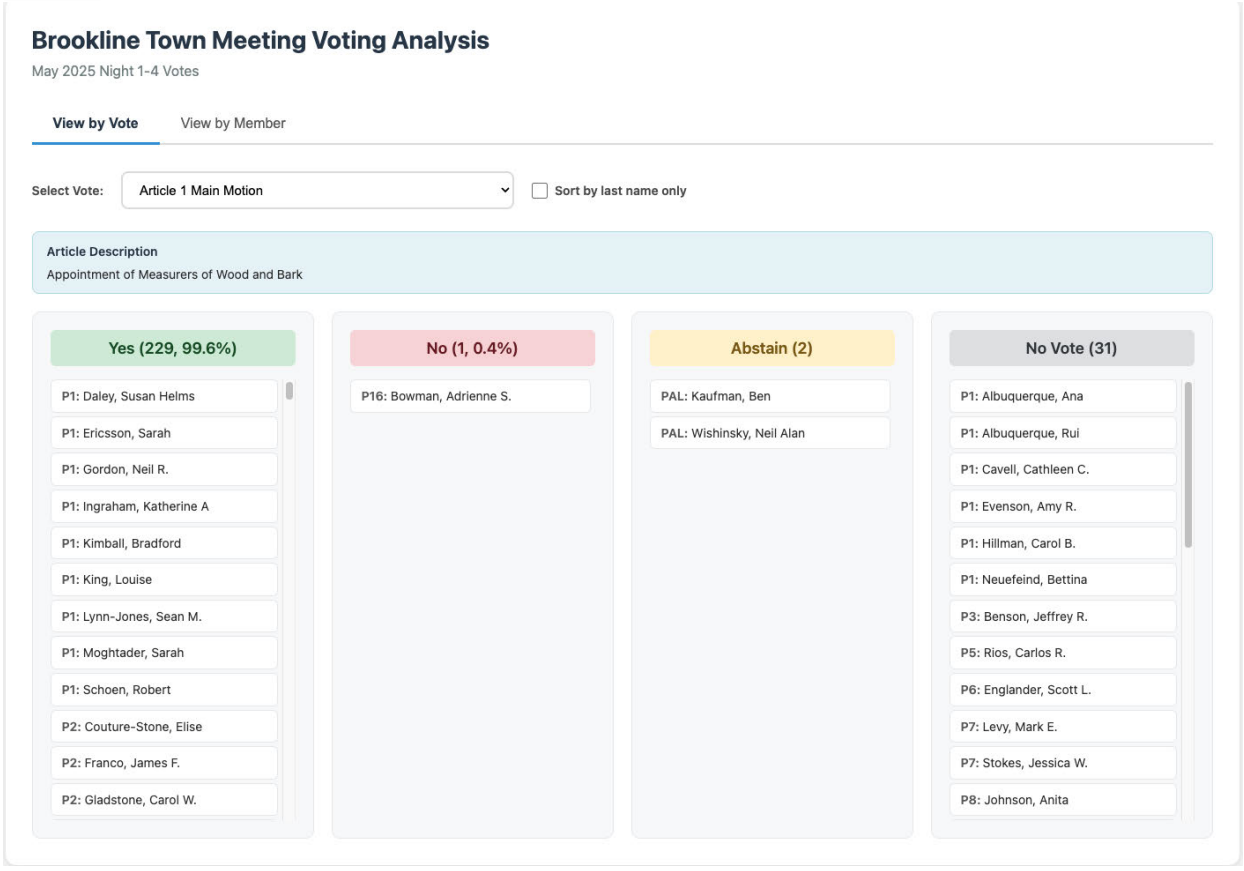
If you don't want to use Claude, there is also an offline version attached to this post called **"brooklineTMM_voteTracker.html"**. Open this file in a modern browser and you should see the same "Load Excel File" prompt. You still need to have Ben's spreadsheet saved to your device. Note that for some reason, this offline version does not seem to work with mobile devices.

When the Current Town Meeting Files website posts Ben's spreadsheet, I may be able to fetch the data automatically, removing the need to save/load the spreadsheet to/from your device.

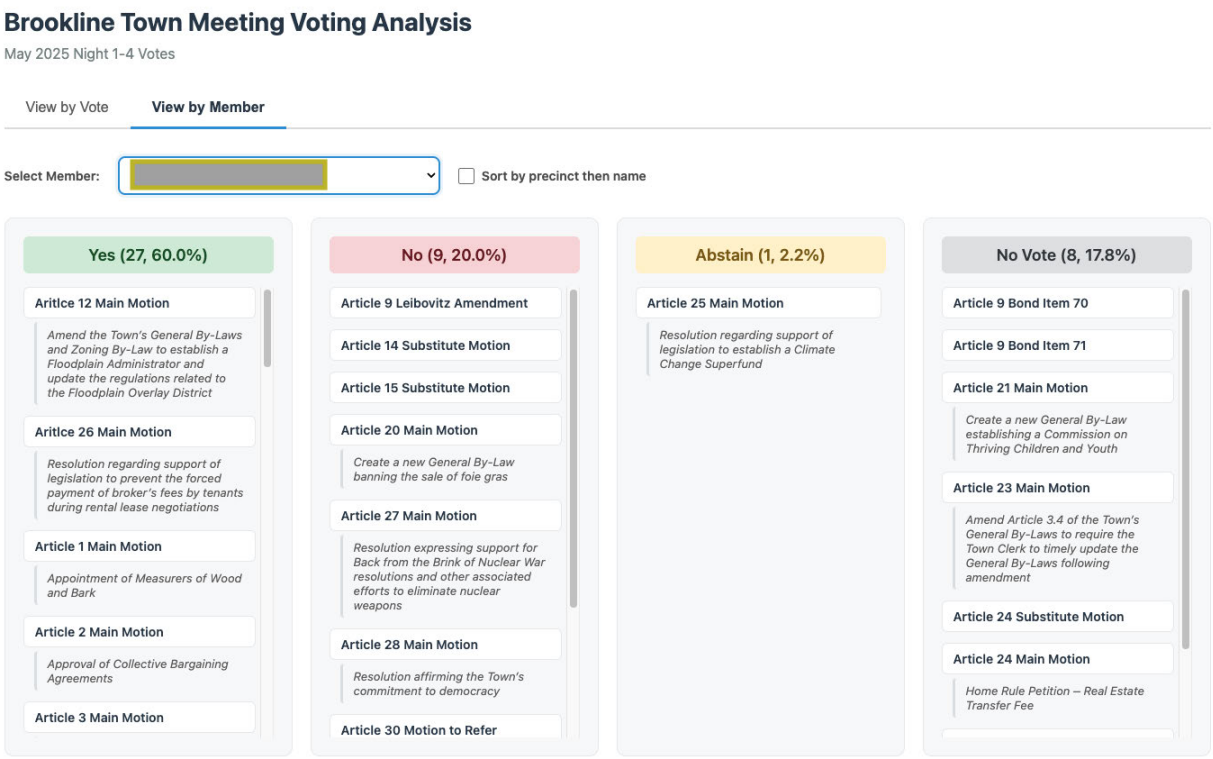
I hope someone else finds this useful. Please feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any technical issues, spot any errors, or want to suggest any improvements.

Rob Schoen, TMM P1
robschoen.robschoen@gmail.com

Screenshot #1



Screenshot #2



Groups.io Links:

You receive all messages sent to this group.

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

Brookline Town Meeting Voting Analysis

May 2025 Night 1-4 Votes

Load Excel File

Please select the voting spreadsheet file

Attachment inline.0.part (133210 Bytes) cannot be converted to PDF format.

Attachment inline.1.part (226467 Bytes) cannot be converted to PDF format.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Framingham TM was dysfunctional
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 10:13:00 AM

>>Framingham voted 4 times against becoming a city, in 1993, 1997, 2013 and one other year, before voting yes in 2017.<<

In comparing Framingham to Brookline, it's worth considering the relative functioning of Representative Town Meeting, as measured by the number of residents seeking TM seats.

Two years before voting to become a city, Framingham's municipal election looked nothing like Brookline's most recent one.

Framingham's TM was 12 members x 18 precincts, i.e., 216 elected members. That's 72/year plus short-term seats. In 2015, of those 72, there were zero competitive races, and no candidate at all for about 40% of the seats. Write in candidates [sic] were elected by 1 or 2 votes, if at all.

There were 20 open short term seats, zero competitive elections, and most of those had no candidate on the ballot. They were filled by write in, or not at all.

Professor Berry, former chair of the MCFG, focused one of his papers on civic engagement. Framingham v. Brookline was staring him in the face, and yet is without mention by him. (Perhaps it didn't fit his preconceived narrative.)

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Marion Freedman-Gurspan via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:50 PM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Framingham was considering becoming a city as far back as 1977 or 1978. I was teaching at BU and one of my students wrote a paper about it. I Framingham voted 4 times against becoming a city, in 1993, 1997, 2013 and one other year, before voting yes in 2017. The city is now having significant political issues and it behooves us to

pay close attention so that we can learn from their missteps.
Marion Freedman-Gurspan TMM09

Sent from AOL on Android

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc:	Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date:	Saturday, June 7, 2025 10:44:33 AM

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io
<jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in

Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to

have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern

about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as “research,” was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for “substantial” work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the Moderator’s Committee.”

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn’t require study or discussion, and makes no mention of “improvement.” The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard … <<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially

ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io

Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and

actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc: Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 11:27:51 AM

Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.

The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.

To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.

The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

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On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
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> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
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Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

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plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
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> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.
>
> But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).
>
> But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if

confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.
>
> -Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

>>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<

By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard … <<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the

confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not

do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc: Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 11:36:10 AM

Please note a correction: When I wrote that a city would not be less democratic than our town, I meant to say that it would be. I should have proof-read one more time.

My apologies.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 11:27:51 AM EDT, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.

The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.

To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.

The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

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On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io

<jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

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On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system

of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

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>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

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-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know

that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

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Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



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>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

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To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the

30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being

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As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

Groups.io Links:

You receive all messages sent to this group.

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: "Brookline TMMA"; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 11:36:24 AM

>>… the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests.<<

That's actually one of the reasons PAX (dis)organized protesters are standing out at CC every other Saturday.



Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

Donate to the PAX Campaign Committee

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 10:44 AM
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.

Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.

Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.

- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected.

These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
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Neil R. Gordon, President

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Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

Groups.io Links:

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	Jonathan Margolis
Cc:	Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date:	Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26:03 PM

Colleagues,

Jon is right: I should have noted one important difference. **The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) and was the inspiration for the 1787 constitutional convention and its work to create the U.S. Constitution. Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.**

It is amazing to me for an elected official to see the voices of Brookline voters to be an antidemocratic process. **It seems like some in Brookline do not trust the voters to make up their own mind. I trust the voters and I will every time.**

I don't know what to say when a Library trustee says that Brookline is not broken. See the multiple stories over the past few years about our library and its employees for more. Thank goodness that we elected a longtime Brookline library employee to become a trustee to address the issues in our library system.

To add to the list of brokenness:

- An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?

- The low morale and difficulty of Brookline to retain employees is not a sign of something broken?

- Our minimal commercial development is not a sign of something broken?

I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times, **this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in Town Meeting.**

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.
>
> To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.
>
> The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.
>
> The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.
>
> The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist

arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.

- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
  - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
  - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
  - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
> Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.
>
> The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.
>
> The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on

whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark.
> The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.
>
> But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).
>
> But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad

school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to

me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."
>
> >>That formal structure for study, discussion, and

actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc: "Brookline TMMA"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 1:24:52 PM

>>The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) …<<

That would be the oldest **written** constitution. The resolution of Brookline Town Meeting I noted when speaking in support of Article 28 specifically cited “the constitution," referring to the then partially unwritten Massachusetts constitution. That “constitution” derived from the Magna Carta, from colonial charters, and from centuries of legal precedent.

>>Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.<<

Actually, no. **Brookline is governed by the Town Administrator’s Act, plus a series of home rule Acts, all specific to Brookline, all written, and legally the equivalent of a town charter**. In addition, of course, we’re governed by state and federal law, both stature and case law, and by common law. **All of this but for common law is written**, but this non-lawyer will note that it’s unlikely there is common law that would apply to Brookline alone.

>>I trust the voters and I will every time.<<

And so can we expect you to pitch a city charter that would provide for a weaker than the Select Board mayor, weaker than Town Meeting city council, weaker than our Town Administrator city manager, and a “power to the people” requirement that there be a ballot question on pretty much everything aside from executing what the voters approve?

>>An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?<<

You repeat the myth. The $8 million was never a budget gap; it was an out of balance proposal by the Superintendent that I’ve previously described as a “Letter to Santa.” The budget voted by Town Meeting was in balance, due in no small part to the work of the School Committee, Select Board, Town Administrator, Town School Partnership Committee and the Advisory Committee, largely through the work of its Schools subcommittee.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

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To add to the list of brokenness:

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I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times, **this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in**

Town Meeting.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

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> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
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> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
>
> On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Colleagues,
>
> I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.
>
> The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national

government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city

government.

- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected.

These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
> Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.
>
> The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation

to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.
>
> But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON

PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who

seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly

listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-

roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, … <<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's

> good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.
>
> Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.
>
> **Jonathan Golden, PhD**
>
> **Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting**
>
> **<image001.jpg>**

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 2:37:37 PM

I'll just add to Neil's perceptive points that the Brookline Public Library is established under state statute, and its organization and policies would not be changed if the town were to become a city. I could explain how we are doing very well right now, but I won't take up more of your time.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 01:24:54 PM EDT, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

>>The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) …<<

That would be the oldest **written** constitution. The resolution of Brookline Town Meeting I noted when speaking in support of Article 28 specifically cited “the constitution," referring to the then partially unwritten Massachusetts constitution. That “constitution” derived from the Magna Carta, from colonial charters, and from centuries of legal precedent.

>>Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.<<

Actually, no. **Brookline is governed by the Town Administrator’s Act, plus a series of home rule Acts, all specific to Brookline, all written, and legally the equivalent of a town charter**. In addition, of course, we’re governed by state and federal law, both stature and case law, and by common law. **All of this but for common law is written**, but this non-lawyer will note that it’s unlikely there is common law that would apply to Brookline alone.

>>I trust the voters and I will every time.<<

And so can we expect you to pitch a city charter that would provide for a weaker than the Select Board mayor, weaker than Town Meeting city council, weaker than our Town Administrator city manager, and a “power to the people” requirement that there be a ballot question on pretty much everything aside from

executing what the voters approve?

>>An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?<<

You repeat the myth. The $8 million was never a budget gap; it was an out of balance proposal by the Superintendent that I've previously described as a "Letter to Santa." The budget voted by Town Meeting was in balance, due in no small part to the work of the School Committee, Select Board, Town Administrator, Town School Partnership Committee and the Advisory Committee, largely through the work of its Schools subcommittee.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Jon is right: I should have noted one important difference. **The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) and was the inspiration for the 1787 constitutional convention and its work to create the U.S. Constitution. Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.**

It is amazing to me for an elected official to see the voices of Brookline voters to be an antidemocratic process. **It seems like some in Brookline do not trust the voters to make up their own mind. I trust the voters and I will every time.**

I don't know what to say when a Library trustee says that Brookline is not broken. See the multiple stories over the past few years about our library and its employees for more. Thank goodness that we elected a longtime Brookline library employee to become a trustee to address the issues in our library system.

To add to the list of brokenness:

- **An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?**

- The low morale and difficulty of Brookline to retain employees is not a sign of something broken?

- Our minimal commercial development is not a sign of something broken?

I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times, **this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in Town Meeting.**

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the

United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.

The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.

To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.

The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

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Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

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Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected.

These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.

Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the

unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."
>
> >>That formal structure for study, discussion, and

actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, … <<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are

apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most

intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: "Brookline TMMA"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 2:59:47 PM

And in a competitive (vote for 4) election, two non-incumbents were elected as Library Trustees.

Similarly, in a competitive School Committee (vote for 3) election, two non-incumbents were elected. (Would there be any change in the composition of our School Committee if Brookline was a city and not a town?)

Regards, Neil

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Margolis via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 2:37 PM
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: 'Brookline TMMA' <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

I'll just add to Neil's perceptive points that the Brookline Public Library is established under state statute, and its organization and policies would not be changed if the town were to become a city. I could explain how we are doing very well right now, but I won't take up more of your time.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 01:24:54 PM EDT, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

>>The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) …<<

That would be the oldest **written** constitution. The resolution of Brookline Town Meeting I noted when speaking in support of Article 28 specifically cited “the constitution," referring to the then partially unwritten Massachusetts constitution. That “constitution” derived from the Magna Carta, from colonial charters, and from centuries of legal precedent.

>>Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.<<

Actually, no. **Brookline is governed by the Town Administrator’s Act, plus a series of home rule Acts, all specific to Brookline, all written, and legally the equivalent of a town charter**. In addition, of course, we’re governed by state and federal law, both stature and case law, and by common law. **All of this but for common law is written**, but this non-lawyer will note that it’s unlikely there is common law that would apply to Brookline alone.

>>I trust the voters and I will every time.<<

And so can we expect you to pitch a city charter that would provide for a weaker than the Select Board mayor, weaker than Town Meeting city council, weaker than our Town Administrator city manager, and a “power to the people” requirement that there be a ballot question on pretty much everything aside from executing what the voters approve?

>>An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?<<

You repeat the myth. The $8 million was never a budget gap; it was an out of balance proposal by the Superintendent that I’ve previously described as a “Letter to Santa.” The budget voted by Town Meeting was in balance, due in no small part to the work of the School Committee, Select Board, Town Administrator, Town School Partnership Committee and the Advisory Committee, largely through the work of its Schools subcommittee.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Jon is right: I should have noted one important difference. **The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) and was the inspiration for the 1787 constitutional convention and its work to create the U.S. Constitution. Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.**

It is amazing to me for an elected official to see the voices of Brookline voters to be an antidemocratic process. **It seems like some in Brookline do not trust the voters to make up their own mind. I trust the voters and I will every time.**

I don't know what to say when a Library trustee says that Brookline is not broken. See the multiple stories over the past few years about our library and its employees for more. Thank goodness that we elected a longtime Brookline library employee to become a trustee to address the issues in our library system.

To add to the list of brokenness:

- An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?

- The low morale and difficulty of Brookline to retain employees is not a sign of something broken?

- Our minimal commercial development is not a sign of something broken?

I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times, **this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in Town Meeting.**

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.
>
> To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.
>
> The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

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2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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2015 Charter Commission:

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- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
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- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

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- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes,

with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected.

These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.

Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The

department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in

too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially

ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, … <<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing --

continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in

the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	neil@nrgordon.com
Cc:	Brookline TMMA
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date:	Saturday, June 7, 2025 3:14:14 PM

Colleagues,

Neil makes a very important point to emphasize the word written. Brookline has the "equivalent" of a charter. The difference matters and I will say once again: Brookline would be better off with an actual charter, even if it put in writing everything about our form of government that we have now.

To Neil's fair question, you can expect me to pitch the charter process itself where I want to explore different forms of government to be explored including mayor, town/city manager, town/city council etc. Thousands of voters agree that we should ask the questions. Those who think they have all the answers do not want the voters or the charter committee to ask any questions.

What Neil dismisses as a "letter to Santa" means that the Driscoll School will have no Vice Principal this year. That is a cut with palpable impact not to be dismissed. Add to that what is happening to BACE and other programs. The school budget is not just tearing up Santa's list. There will be coal in some people's stockings.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 1:24 PM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) … <<
>
> That would be the oldest **written** constitution. The resolution of Brookline Town Meeting I noted when speaking in support of Article 28 specifically cited “the constitution," referring to the then partially unwritten Massachusetts constitution. That “constitution” derived from the Magna Carta, from colonial charters, and from centuries of legal precedent.
>
> >>Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.<<

Actually, no. **Brookline is governed by the Town Administrator's Act, plus a series of home rule Acts, all specific to Brookline, all written, and legally the equivalent of a town charter**. In addition, of course, we're governed by state and federal law, both stature and case law, and by common law. **All of this but for common law is written**, but this non-lawyer will note that it's unlikely there is common law that would apply to Brookline alone.

>>I trust the voters and I will every time.<<

And so can we expect you to pitch a city charter that would provide for a weaker than the Select Board mayor, weaker than Town Meeting city council, weaker than our Town Administrator city manager, and a "power to the people" requirement that there be a ballot question on pretty much everything aside from executing what the voters approve?

>>An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?<<

You repeat the myth. The $8 million was never a budget gap; it was an out of balance proposal by the Superintendent that I've previously described as a "Letter to Santa." The budget voted by Town Meeting was in balance, due in no small part to the work of the School Committee, Select Board, Town Administrator, Town School Partnership Committee and the Advisory Committee, largely through the work of its Schools subcommittee.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io

Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Jon is right: I should have noted one important difference. **The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) and was the inspiration for the 1787 constitutional convention and its work to create the U.S. Constitution. Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.**

It is amazing to me for an elected official to see the voices of Brookline voters to be an antidemocratic process. **It seems like some in Brookline do not trust the voters to make up their own mind. I trust the voters and I will every time.**

I don't know what to say when a Library trustee says that Brookline is not broken. See the multiple stories over the past few years about our library and its employees for more. Thank goodness that we elected a longtime Brookline library employee to become a trustee to address the issues in our library system.

To add to the list of brokenness:

- An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?

- The low morale and difficulty of Brookline to retain employees is not a sign of something broken?

- Our minimal commercial development is not a sign of something broken?

I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome

them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times, **this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in Town Meeting.**

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.
>
> To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.

The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.

Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.

    - Implementing term limits for councilors.

- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected.

These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and

see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a

platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

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I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.

Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest

in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by

individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the

importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io

<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form

of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that

Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: jjmargolis@yahoo.com; Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 3:19:43 PM

Colleagues,

Some people think the form of government is just about elections. It has deeper implications than that.

Let's take one example from the DESE website on per pupil spending by town/city (https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/ppx.aspx):

Cambridge. $38, 932 per student
Boston. $31, 882
Weston $31, 012
Watertown. $27, 612
Wellesley $27, 590
Amherst $27,333
Dedham $26, 693
Brookline $26,528
Concord $26,175
Newton $25, 275
Lexington $25,166

Look at the form of government of some of the places above Brookline on this list. Is it a coincidence that many are cities and we are a town? Does it have to do with commercial development and form of government? While I have no expectation of Brookline making it to the top of the list, can we do better on this measurement? These are great questions for a charter commission to explore as it explores forms of government.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 2:59 PM Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> And in a competitive (vote for 4) election, two non-incumbents were elected as Library Trustees.

Similarly, in a competitive School Committee (vote for 3) election, two non-incumbents were elected. (Would there be any change in the composition of our School Committee if Brookline was a city and not a town?)

Regards, Neil

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Margolis via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 2:37 PM
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: 'Brookline TMMA' <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

I'll just add to Neil's perceptive points that the Brookline Public Library is established under state statute, and its organization and policies would not be changed if the town were to become a city. I could explain how we are doing very well right now, but I won't take up more of your time.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 01:24:54 PM EDT, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

>>The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) …<<

That would be the oldest **written** constitution. The resolution of Brookline Town Meeting I noted when speaking in support of Article 28 specifically cited “the constitution," referring to the then partially unwritten Massachusetts constitution. That “constitution” derived from the Magna Carta, from colonial charters, and from centuries of legal precedent.

>>Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.<<

Actually, no. **Brookline is governed by the Town Administrator’s Act, plus a series of home rule Acts, all specific to Brookline, all written, and legally the equivalent of a town charter**. In addition, of course, we’re governed by state and federal law, both stature and case law, and by common law. **All of this but for common law is written**, but this non-lawyer will note that it’s unlikely there is common law that would apply to Brookline alone.

>>I trust the voters and I will every time.<<

And so can we expect you to pitch a city charter that would provide for a weaker than the Select Board mayor, weaker than Town Meeting city council, weaker than our Town Administrator city manager, and a “power to the people” requirement that there be a ballot question on pretty much everything aside from executing what the voters approve?

>>An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?<<

You repeat the myth. The $8 million was never a budget gap; it was an out of balance proposal by the Superintendent that I’ve previously described as a “Letter to Santa.” The budget voted by Town Meeting was in balance, due in no small part to the work of the School Committee, Select Board, Town Administrator, Town School Partnership Committee and the Advisory Committee, largely through the work of its Schools subcommittee.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Jon is right: I should have noted one important difference. **The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) and was the inspiration for the 1787 constitutional convention and its work to create the U.S. Constitution. Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.**

It is amazing to me for an elected official to see the voices of Brookline voters to be an antidemocratic process. **It seems like some in Brookline do not trust the voters to make up their own mind. I trust the voters and I will every time.**

I don't know what to say when a Library trustee says that Brookline is not broken. See the multiple stories over the past few years about our library and its employees for more. Thank goodness that we elected a longtime Brookline library employee to become a trustee to address the issues in our library system.

To add to the list of brokenness:

- An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?

- The low morale and difficulty of Brookline to retain employees is not a sign of something broken?

- Our minimal commercial development is not a sign of something broken?

I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times, **this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in Town Meeting.**

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not

directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.

To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.

The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.

Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.

Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to

adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:

    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.

- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected.

These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would

require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and

produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
>
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
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> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

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But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.
>
> -Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

>>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<

By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are

apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend

the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes

of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bernard Greene via groups.io <bwgreene2001=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Thinking Differently in Support of WA 28
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 6:53:15 PM

Here are a couple of thoughts that I did not have the opportunity to present to Town Meeting in support of WA 28 on Thursday.

WA 28 resolved "to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic." In my opinion, the First Amendment to that Constitution is the most important part of the democracy that the Constitution establishes. It gives us the right to speak, march, petition our government, and most importantly, to think for ourselves.

It also implicitly imposes on us a duty to protect the right of others to think for themselves when they are expressing their ideas whether in a university lecture hall, a campus newspaper, or a Town Meeting, especially when their ideas or proposals differ from the majority, such as the Gaza ceasefire resolutions of 2023 and 2024.

Rosa Luxemburg understood that duty. Writing on the problem of dictatorship in her critique of the Russian Revolution, she said: "Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently."

Rosa Luxemburg, an early 20th century Polish born economist and Marxist thinker, understood the importance of America's First Amendment more than many supposed learned Republican and Democratic politicians of our time. She understood that to build and defend a strong country, or to build a strong movement to fight for the ideals of that country, you can't use the methods of the dictators, which are to crush dissent and blindly stumble down the path of past mistakes and failed policies.

Bernard Greene

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc: "Brookline TMMA"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 7:58:06 PM

>>The difference matters and I will say once again: Brookline would be better off with an actual charter, even if it put in writing everything about our form of government that we have now.<<

Use a larger font, make it bold and underline it, you'd still be arguing a distinction without a difference.

Brookline is governed by the written US Constitution, written Federal law, written Federal case law which is not codified, written Federal regulations, the written Massachusetts Constitution, written Massachusetts General Laws, written Massachusetts case law which is not codified, written Brookline specific Massachusetts law, written local Brookline bylaws, written local Brookline regulations, and otherwise well-defined (by written case law) common law.

If you're serious that Brookline needs a single, local document describing Brookline specific Massachusetts law, which is all a charter would be, then petition a Warrant Article to that effect. No doubt Town Counsel's office could create a charter-equivalent memorandum without the need for 18 months of work by a charter commission, that would need to rely on counsel to write pretty much exactly the same thing.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 3:14 PM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Neil makes a very important point to emphasize the word written. Brookline has the "equivalent" of a charter. The difference matters and I will say once again: Brookline would be better off with an actual charter, even if it put in writing everything about our

form of government that we have now.

To Neil's fair question, you can expect me to pitch the charter process itself where I want to explore different forms of government to be explored including mayor, town/city manager, town/city council etc. Thousands of voters agree that we should ask the questions. Those who think they have all the answers do not want the voters or the charter committee to ask any questions.

What Neil dismisses as a "letter to Santa" means that the Driscoll School will have no Vice Principal this year. That is a cut with palpable impact not to be dismissed. Add to that what is happening to BACE and other programs. The school budget is not just tearing up Santa's list. There will be coal in some people's stockings.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 1:24 PM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) …<<
>
> That would be the oldest **written** constitution. The resolution of Brookline Town Meeting I noted when speaking in support of Article 28 specifically cited “the constitution," referring to the then partially unwritten Massachusetts constitution. That “constitution” derived from the Magna Carta, from colonial charters, and from centuries of legal precedent.
>
> >>Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.<<
>
> Actually, no. **Brookline is governed by the Town Administrator’s Act, plus a series of home rule Acts, all specific to Brookline, all written, and legally the equivalent of a town charter**. In addition, of course, we’re governed by state and federal law, both stature and case law, and by common law. **All of this but for common law is written**, but this non-lawyer will note that it’s unlikely there is common law that would apply to Brookline alone.
>
> >>I trust the voters and I will every time.<<
>
> And so can we expect you to pitch a city charter that would provide for a weaker than the Select Board mayor, weaker than Town Meeting city council, weaker than

our Town Administrator city manager, and a “power to the people” requirement that there be a ballot question on pretty much everything aside from executing what the voters approve?

>>An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?<<

You repeat the myth. The $8 million was never a budget gap; it was an out of balance proposal by the Superintendent that I’ve previously described as a “Letter to Santa.” The budget voted by Town Meeting was in balance, due in no small part to the work of the School Committee, Select Board, Town Administrator, Town School Partnership Committee and the Advisory Committee, largely through the work of its Schools subcommittee.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Jon is right: I should have noted one important difference. **The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) and was the inspiration for the 1787 constitutional convention and its work to create the U.S. Constitution. Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.**

It is amazing to me for an elected official to see the voices of Brookline voters to be an antidemocratic process. **It seems like some in Brookline do not trust the voters to make up their own mind. I trust the voters and I will every time.**

I don't know what to say when a Library trustee says that Brookline is not broken. See the multiple stories over the past few years about our library and its employees for more. Thank goodness that we elected a longtime Brookline library employee to become a trustee to address the issues in our library system.

To add to the list of brokenness:

- An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?

- The low morale and difficulty of Brookline to retain employees is not a sign of something broken?

- Our minimal commercial development is not a sign of something broken?

I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times, **this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in Town Meeting.**

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.
>
> To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.
>
> The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case

that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

> Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."
>
> First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to

form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.

    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.

- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected.

These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and

see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky

Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true. Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his

Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.
>
> -Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

>>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<

By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and

actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves,

...<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that

emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges

together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

Groups.io Links:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Elizabeth Childs via groups.io <elizabethchilds=me.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc: neil@nrgordon.com; jjmargolis@yahoo.com; Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Saturday, June 7, 2025 8:48:55 PM

Dear Jonathan,

I think it is important not to make assumptions about the form of government as the cause of the differences in per pupil funding in municipalities. For example, one of the challenges in Cambridge is having enough students in their public schools, which they have historically funded robustly. Many families are concerned about the dwindling number of families in Cambridge who have children enrolled in the public schools. With fewer students, the spending per pupil goes up.

Furthermore, the per pupil spending does not necessarily correlate with student outcomes. On your list, Boston Latin was ranked as the best high school in Massachusetts recently, while Lexington at the bottom of your list ranked third. The second ranked high school is in Hadley, Massachusetts, which didn't even make this list.

I don't dispute your numbers, but don't believe that we can draw any conclusions about the relationship between per pupil spending, form of municipal government, and, even student outcomes. It's one of the challenges in school financing that simply increasing per pupil spending does not necessarily translate into improved student outcomes. If only it were that easy!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Childs
TMM-04

> On Jun 7, 2025, at 3:19 PM, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Colleagues,
>
> Some people think the form of government is just about elections. It has deeper implications than that.
>
> Let's take one example from the DESE website on per pupil spending by town/city (https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/ppx.aspx):
>
> Cambridge. $38, 932 per student
> Boston. $31, 882
> Weston $31, 012
> Watertown. $27, 612
> Wellesley $27, 590
> Amherst $27,333
> Dedham $26, 693
> **Brookline $26,528**
> Concord $26,175
> Newton $25, 275
> Lexington $25,166

Look at the form of government of some of the places above Brookline on this list. Is it a coincidence that many are cities and we are a town? Does it have to do with commercial development and form of government? While I have no expectation of Brookline making it to the top of the list, can we do better on this measurement? These are great questions for a charter commission to explore as it explores forms of government.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 2:59 PM Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> And in a competitive (vote for 4) election, two non-incumbents were elected as Library Trustees.
>
> Similarly, in a competitive School Committee (vote for 3) election, two non-incumbents were elected. (Would there be any change in the composition of our School Committee if Brookline was a city and not a town?)
>
> Regards, Neil
>
> Neil R. Gordon, President
>
> N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
>
> 87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (508) 265-1362
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Margolis via groups.io
> **Sent:** Saturday, June 7, 2025 2:37 PM
> **To:** jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; neil@nrgordon.com
> **Cc:** 'Brookline TMMA' <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Subject:** Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
>
> I'll just add to Neil's perceptive points that the Brookline Public Library is established under state statute, and its organization and policies would not be changed if the town were to become a city. I could explain how we are doing very well right now, but I won't take up more of your time.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 01:24:54 PM EDT, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

>>The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) …<<

That would be the oldest **written** constitution. The resolution of Brookline Town Meeting I noted when speaking in support of Article 28 specifically cited “the constitution," referring to the then partially unwritten Massachusetts constitution. That “constitution” derived from the Magna Carta, from colonial charters, and from centuries of legal precedent.

>>Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.<<

Actually, no. **Brookline is governed by the Town Administrator’s Act, plus a series of home rule Acts, all specific to Brookline, all written, and legally the equivalent of a town charter**. In addition, of course, we’re governed by state and federal law, both stature and case law, and by common law. **All of this but for common law is written**, but this non-lawyer will note that it’s unlikely there is common law that would apply to Brookline alone.

>>I trust the voters and I will every time.<<

And so can we expect you to pitch a city charter that would provide for a weaker than the Select Board mayor, weaker than Town Meeting city council, weaker than our Town Administrator city manager, and a “power to the people” requirement that there be a ballot question on pretty much everything aside from executing what the voters approve?

>>An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?<<

You repeat the myth. The $8 million was never a budget gap; it was an out of balance proposal by

the Superintendent that I've previously described as a "Letter to Santa." The budget voted by Town Meeting was in balance, due in no small part to the work of the School Committee, Select Board, Town Administrator, Town School Partnership Committee and the Advisory Committee, largely through the work of its Schools subcommittee.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Jon is right: I should have noted one important difference. **The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) and was the inspiration for the 1787 constitutional convention and its work to create the U.S. Constitution. Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.**

It is amazing to me for an elected official to see the voices of Brookline voters to be an antidemocratic process. **It seems like some in Brookline do not trust the voters to make up their own mind. I trust the voters and I will every time.**

I don't know what to say when a Library trustee says that Brookline is not broken. See the multiple stories over the past few years about our library and its employees for more. Thank goodness that we elected a longtime Brookline library employee to become a trustee to address the issues in our library system.

To add to the list of brokenness:

- An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?

- The low morale and difficulty of Brookline to retain employees is not a sign of something broken?

- Our minimal commercial development is not a sign of something broken?

I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times, **this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in Town Meeting.**

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.

To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.

The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a

bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it

pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.

Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In

contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased

mission, “to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting.” For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial. <<

What the Committee touted as “research,” was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for “substantial” work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the Moderator’s Committee.”

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn’t require study or discussion, and makes no

mention of “improvement.” The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming “back to Town Meeting*.”

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don’t. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be “augmented,” for

reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the

Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is

important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and

bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	neil@nrgordon.com
Cc:	Brookline TMMA
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date:	Saturday, June 7, 2025 8:50:06 PM

Colleagues,

If anyone would like to write the warrant article that Neil proposes, please go right ahead. Please also ask Town Counsel if a "charter-equivalent memorandum" would suffice.

My focus remains on Brookline voters and their voice.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 7:58 PM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>The difference matters and I will say once again: Brookline would be better off with an actual charter, even if it put in writing everything about our form of government that we have now.<<
>
> Use a larger font, make it bold and underline it, you'd still be arguing a distinction without a difference.
>
> Brookline is governed by the written US Constitution, written Federal law, written Federal case law which is not codified, written Federal regulations, the written Massachusetts Constitution, written Massachusetts General Laws, written Massachusetts case law which is not codified, written Brookline specific Massachusetts law, written local Brookline bylaws, written local Brookline regulations, and otherwise well-defined (by written case law) common law.
>
> If you're serious that Brookline needs a single, local document describing Brookline specific Massachusetts law, which is all a charter would be, then petition a Warrant Article to that effect. No doubt Town Counsel's office could create a charter-equivalent memorandum without the need for 18 months of work by a charter commission, that would need to rely on counsel to write pretty much exactly the same thing.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 3:14 PM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Neil makes a very important point to emphasize the word written. Brookline has the "equivalent" of a charter. The difference matters and I will say once again: Brookline would be better off with an actual charter, even if it put in writing everything about our form of government that we have now.

To Neil's fair question, you can expect me to pitch the charter process itself where I want to explore different forms of government to be explored including mayor, town/city manager, town/city council etc. Thousands of voters agree that we should ask the questions. Those who think they have all the answers do not want the voters or the charter committee to ask any questions.

What Neil dismisses as a "letter to Santa" means that the Driscoll School will have no Vice Principal this year. That is a cut with palpable impact not to be dismissed. Add to that what is happening to BACE and other programs. The school budget is not just tearing up Santa's list. There will be coal in some people's stockings.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 1:24 PM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) …<<
>
> That would be the oldest **written** constitution. The resolution of Brookline Town Meeting I noted when speaking in support of Article 28 specifically cited “the constitution," referring to the then partially unwritten Massachusetts constitution. That “constitution” derived from the Magna Carta, from colonial charters, and from centuries of legal precedent.
>
> >>Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.<<
>
> Actually, no. **Brookline is governed by the Town Administrator’s Act, plus a series of home rule Acts, all specific to Brookline, all written, and legally the equivalent of a town charter**. In addition, of course, we’re governed by state and federal law, both stature and case law, and by common law. **All of this but for common law is written**, but this non-lawyer will note that it’s unlikely there is common law that would apply to Brookline alone.
>
> >>I trust the voters and I will every time.<<
>
> And so can we expect you to pitch a city charter that would provide for a weaker than the

Select Board mayor, weaker than Town Meeting city council, weaker than our Town Administrator city manager, and a “power to the people” requirement that there be a ballot question on pretty much everything aside from executing what the voters approve?

>>An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?<<

You repeat the myth. The $8 million was never a budget gap; it was an out of balance proposal by the Superintendent that I’ve previously described as a “Letter to Santa.” The budget voted by Town Meeting was in balance, due in no small part to the work of the School Committee, Select Board, Town Administrator, Town School Partnership Committee and the Advisory Committee, largely through the work of its Schools subcommittee.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 7, 2025 12:26 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Jon is right: I should have noted one important difference. **The Massachusetts State Constitution is the oldest living constitution on Earth (1780) and was the inspiration**

for the 1787 constitutional convention and its work to create the U.S. Constitution. Thus, pursuing a charter process in Brookline puts us in very good company with the history of our commonwealth and our country.

It is amazing to me for an elected official to see the voices of Brookline voters to be an antidemocratic process. **It seems like some in Brookline do not trust the voters to make up their own mind. I trust the voters and I will every time.**

I don't know what to say when a Library trustee says that Brookline is not broken. See the multiple stories over the past few years about our library and its employees for more. Thank goodness that we elected a longtime Brookline library employee to become a trustee to address the issues in our library system.

To add to the list of brokenness:

- **An 8 million dollar budget gap in schools is not a sign of something broken?**

- The low morale and difficulty of Brookline to retain employees is not a sign of something broken?

- Our minimal commercial development is not a sign of something broken?

I am sure that others on this list can add to what they see as broken and I welcome them to do so.

While I am amazed that some town leaders think that everything is fine and that there is "nothing to see here" that needs fixing, I **will continue to do my duty as a Town Meeting Member and raise the voice of those who do see key parts of our town and our system of government as broken.**

I wish all of you could have seen the enthusiasm of those who signed my petition this morning to put a charter commission question on the ballot. As I have said many times,

this debate will be decided by Brookline voters, not just those of us in Town Meeting.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Sat, Jun 7, 2025 at 11:27 AM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.
>
> To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.
>
> The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who

favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so

here is my “two cents” worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don’t like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a “do over.”

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
>
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of

the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back*

to Town Meeting."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM

To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about

what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Margolis; leroseman@gmail.com; jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 12:13:55 AM

It will be a binary choice when we get to voting: A charter commission or no charter commission; adopt the charter produced by the Charter Commission or reject it. What we have to do is make sure that if we have a charter commission, there is a progressive, forward-looking Town proposal on the table.

On 6/6/2025 10:26 AM, Jonathan Margolis wrote:

> The problem--to me--is that the leading proponents of charter change have made it crystal-clear that they believe Brookline should become a city. We might, then, expect them to push for exactly the binary choice that Jonathan decries. And as those with the most money are likely to weigh in for the same outcome, a binary choice is all we are likely to see presented to voters, at least by those with the most resources to argue the case.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 08:15:43 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I agree as well that this should not be a binary choice. The good news is that the process does not need to be framed or conducted as a binary choice between city and town. Should the charter commission question reach the ballot, I imagine that candidates will take all kinds of positions about the future of our municipality. A well run charter commission will take into consideration multiple models of town government and city government before bringing a proposal to the voters. Most importantly, at every step of the process, Brookline voters will decide whether or not to proceed.

I also agree with Joe that we should look for ways to improve our current system of government as the charter process will take years to unfold. I thank the leadership of our Town Moderator Neil Wishinsky who has modeled improved communication and transparency with Town Meeting to the benefit of Town Meeting Members and the public alike.

Best wishes to all for a restful and restorative summer,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:50 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.
>
> Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

On 6/5/2025 2:07 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io wrote:

> What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.
>
> How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?
>
> Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.

Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

> Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am–not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.
>
> In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.
>
> **No Action on WA30**
>
> It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.
>
> I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.
>
> As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He nonetheless completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.
>
> **Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31**
>
> Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.
>
> With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).
>
> Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.
>
> Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents"; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like "the tradeoffs with each alternative"; and (3) for its management, "an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear."
– *Harry S. Truman*

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--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 2:33:34 AM

As I understand it, the only thing Newton did recently was change the name of the Board of Aldermen to the City Council. As we did with the Select Board about the same time.

On 6/6/2025 7:39 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

> Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."
>
> First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it

may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic

governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools,
increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
> Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.
>
> The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.
>
> The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with

elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.
>
> But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town

Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
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Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

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Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

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>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or

expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets

us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Framingham TM was dysfunctional
Date:	Sunday, June 8, 2025 2:52:47 AM

Back about 20 years ago I chaired a TMMA committee that visited representative town meetings in neighboring towns, just to get an idea of what other towns did. We visited Framingham twice. At first we were impressed at certain things. They had a system of standing committees, each with one member from each precinct. That seemed like an interesting idea, but in practice, the only report they gave was a statement during the consideration of a Warrant Article that the committee had voted by whatever number in favor or opposed to the Article. And the numbers given reflected that many of the committee seats apparently were not filled. The committees never gave anything like the reports that we get from our Advisory Committee. I asked about reports on Articles and was directed to a table which contained "backup materials." They were all prepared by proponents and opponents.

In fact, one thing that I got out of those visits was a real appreciation of our Advisory Committee. Of the roughly half-dozen towns we visited, only Natick had anything even close to the kind of reports we get from the Advisory Committee on every Article. I don't think any city comes close either.

On 6/7/2025 10:12 AM, Neil Gordon via groups.io wrote:

> >>Framingham voted 4 times against becoming a city, in 1993, 1997, 2013 and one other year, before voting yes in 2017.<<
>
> In comparing Framingham to Brookline, it's worth considering the relative functioning of Representative Town Meeting, as measured by the number of residents seeking TM seats.
>
> Two years before voting to become a city, Framingham's municipal election looked nothing like Brookline's most recent one.
>
> Framingham's TM was 12 members x 18 precincts, i.e., 216 elected members. That's 72/year plus short-term seats. In 2015, of those 72, there were zero competitive races, and no candidate at all for about 40% of the seats. Write in candidates [sic] were elected by 1 or 2 votes, if at all.
>
> There were 20 open short term seats, zero competitive elections, and most of those had no candidate on the ballot. They were filled by write in, or not at all.
>
> Professor Berry, former chair of the MCFG, focused one of his papers on civic engagement. Framingham v. Brookline was staring him in the face, and yet is without mention by him. (Perhaps it didn't fit his preconceived narrative.)

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Marion Freedman-Gurspan via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:50 PM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Framingham was considering becoming a city as far back as 1977 or 1978. I was teaching at BU and one of my students wrote a paper about it. I Framingham voted 4 times against becoming a city, in 1993, 1997, 2013 and one other year, before voting yes in 2017. The city is now having significant political issues and it behooves us to pay close attention so that we can learn from their missteps.
Marion Freedman-Gurspan TMM09

Sent from AOL on Android

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: A Joseph Ross
Cc: Jonathan Margolis; jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 8:16:55 AM

Does anyone know: Do candidates for Charter Commission necessarily run as a slate?
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

On Jun 8, 2025, at 12:13 AM, A Joseph Ross <joe@attorneyross.com> wrote:

It will be a binary choice when we get to voting: A charter commission or no charter commission; adopt the charter produced by the Charter Commission or reject it. What we have to do is make sure that if we have a charter commission, there is a progressive, forward-looking Town proposal on the table.

On 6/6/2025 10:26 AM, Jonathan Margolis wrote:

> The problem--to me--is that the leading proponents of charter change have made it crystal-clear that they believe Brookline should become a city. We might, then, expect them to push for exactly the binary choice that Jonathan decries. And as those with the most money are likely to weigh in for the same outcome, a binary choice is all we are likely to see presented to voters, at least by those with the most resources to argue the case.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 08:15:43 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I agree as well that this should not be a binary choice. The good news is that the process does not need to be framed or conducted as a binary choice between city and town. Should the charter commission question reach the ballot, I imagine that candidates will take all kinds of positions about the future of our municipality. A well run charter commission will take into consideration multiple models of town government and city government before bringing a

proposal to the voters. Most importantly, at every step of the process, Brookline voters will decide whether or not to proceed.

I also agree with Joe that we should look for ways to improve our current system of government as the charter process will take years to unfold. I thank the leadership of our Town Moderator Neil Wishinsky who has modeled improved communication and transparency with Town Meeting to the benefit of Town Meeting Members and the public alike.

Best wishes to all for a restful and restorative summer,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:50 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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> Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
> **Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
> **To:** brooklinetmma@groups.io
> **Subject:** Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31
>
> Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."
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votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.

How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?

Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.

Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

> Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am–not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.
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significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

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Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: A Joseph Ross; leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 8:32:20 AM

No.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct.7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 8:32:53 AM

Gentle reminder, Joe — please add your name and precinct number to posts.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 8, 2025, at 2:33 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> As I understand it, the only thing Newton did recently was change the name of the Board of Aldermen to the City Council. As we did with the Select Board about the same time.
>
> On 6/6/2025 7:39 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io wrote:
>
> > First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
> >
> > Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
> >
> > Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
> >
> > Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> > Brookline, MA 02446
> > (617) 240-3205
> > *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
>
> On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit

the town's governmental structure.

- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
  - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
  - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
  - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

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- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

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- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis

<jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell

you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

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On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run.
One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable

thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

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> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
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tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The

> Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has

been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, … <<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's

committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

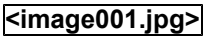
As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners

actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

Groups.io Links:

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View/Reply Online (#45308) | Reply to Sender | Reply to Group | Mute This Topic | New Topic
Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] By law v charter change
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 9:46:08 AM

>> As I understand it, the only thing Newton did recently was change the name of the Board of Aldermen to the City Council. As we did with the Select Board about the same time.<<

We changed “Board of Selectmen” to “Select Board,” and “Selectman” to “Select Board member” by a vote of Town Meeting that amended the Zoning and General bylaws. Did Newton need to change it’s charter to accomplish essentially the same thing?

Regards, Neil, TMM1

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Sent: Sunday, June 8, 2025 2:33 AM
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Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

As I understand it, the only thing Newton did recently was change the name of the Board of Aldermen to the City Council. As we did with the Select Board about the same time.

On 6/6/2025 7:39 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14

votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

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Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
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> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a

year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as “research,” was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for “substantial” work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the Moderator’s Committee.”

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn’t require study or discussion, and makes no mention of “improvement.” The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter

Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your

consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and

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The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

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<image001.jpg>

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Mike Toffel, TMM8

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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
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To: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; neil@nrgordon.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] By law v charter change
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 9:53:59 AM

Apparently, I was mistaken in asserting that Newton had changed its charter within recent memory.

Profuse apologies to all.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 09:46:08 AM EDT, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

>> As I understand it, the only thing Newton did recently was change the name of the Board of Aldermen to the City Council. As we did with the Select Board about the same time.<<

We changed “Board of Selectmen” to “Select Board,” and “Selectman” to “Select Board member” by a vote of Town Meeting that amended the Zoning and General bylaws. Did Newton need to change it’s charter to accomplish essentially the same thing?

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Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

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On 6/6/2025 7:39 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io wrote:

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On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it

may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.

    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.

- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.

Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this

was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite

defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the

Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

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Cc: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Neil Gordon
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] By law v charter change
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 10:01:46 AM

Well, you were technically correct, they did change their charter, as Joe Ross alertly pointed out, but it didn't require a Charter Commission. Here is was happened (again with thanks to ChatGPT for the research):

- In March 2015, by a 19-5 vote, the Newton Board of Aldermen approved a petition to amend the city charter, moving away from title "Alderman" to "City Councilor" .
- The petition, filed as a Home Rule Petition, was taken up—and passed—by the Massachusetts Legislature later in 2015
- The change officially took effect on January 1, 2016. That day, the 24 sitting aldermen were sworn in under their new titles as City Councilors.

Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and

believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It

seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
>
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded

meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image002.jpg>

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the

> work [sic] of MCFG “complete.” The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, “**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, “to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting.” For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as “research,” was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for “substantial” work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the

Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the

MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, … <<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it

started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

<image002.jpg>

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: A. Joseph Ross; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 10:58:14 AM

If we stop wasting time with "study committees" and actually start the process of exploring change, we will elect a charter commission. The charter commission is an elected body that will not be making a binary choice but will present a set of options that may include changes to our town form of government, or adopting any of the various forms of city government. Then we will vote again which to approve, from a variety of choices. That will be submitted to the legislature, for its approval and then, I think, another town wide vote.

This process will take several years, and does require us to make any change, but, as it will take several years, we should stop wasting time with more "study" committees and get started on the process of exploring whether to change our form of government, and, if so how.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 6, 2025, at 7:50 AM, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.
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>
> ---
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> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
> **Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
> **To:** brooklinetmma@groups.io
> **Subject:** Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31
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> Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."
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city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.

How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?

Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.

Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

> Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am–not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.
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> In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.
>
> **No Action on WA30**
>
> It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.
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> I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.
>
> As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He nonetheless completed significant work in

his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents"; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like "the tradeoffs with each alternative"; and (3) for its management, "an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

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A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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To: leroseman@gmail.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: A. Joseph Ross; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 11:13:39 AM

Andrew,

Can you cite anything to support your contention that voters would get to approve A, B, C or D, rather than voting Yea or Nay on the commission's recommendation? I would be surprised if that were the case, but I'm prepared to be enlightened.

Jonathan J. Margolis Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

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Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents"; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like "the tradeoffs with each alternative"; and (3) for its management, "an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

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A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.”
– *Harry S. Truman*

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A. Joseph Ross
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Klein
Cc: Jonathan Margolis; joe@attorneyross.com; BrooklineTMMA; Neil Gordon
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] By law v charter change
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 11:26:15 AM

Colleagues,
I posted this before, but not clear from the back and forth here that it was read. Newton had a charter commission between 2015-2017, initiated by the Newton League of Women Voters which had studied and then recommended reducing the size and changing the electoral makeup of Newton's City Council.

The League then spearheaded the successful signature drive for a Charter Commission and the charter commission was elected in 2015, but the proposal eventually put to the voters failed 10,963 yes to 12,570 no. Folks in Newton are still arguing about why the result went that way, but there is no argument that the charter commission happened. The Commission's report is here for anyone interested in how that particular process worked:
https://www.newtonma.gov/government/charter-commission

Rebecca Stone (she/her)
TMM Pct 3
Chair, Brookline City Charter Campaign

Learn more about Brookline's Precinct 3: https://sites.google.com/view/brooklinep3/home/

Learn more about the campaign for a Charter Commission: www.brooklinecitycharter.com

> On Jun 8, 2025, at 10:01 AM, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Well, you were technically correct, they did change their charter, as Joe Ross alertly pointed out, but it didn't require a Charter Commission. Here is was happened (again with thanks to ChatGPT for the research):
>
> - In March 2015, by a 19-5 vote, the Newton Board of Aldermen approved a petition to amend the city charter, moving away from title "Alderman" to "City Councilor" .
> - The petition, filed as a Home Rule Petition, was taken up—and passed—by the Massachusetts Legislature later in 2015
> - The change officially took effect on January 1, 2016. That day, the 24 sitting aldermen were sworn in under their new titles as City Councilors.
>
> Jonathan Klein
> TMM P17
>
> > On Jun 8, 2025, at 9:53 AM, Jon Margolis via groups.io

<jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Apparently, I was mistaken in asserting that Newton had changed its charter within recent memory.

Profuse apologies to all.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 09:46:08 AM EDT, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

>> As I understand it, the only thing Newton did recently was change the name of the Board of Aldermen to the City Council. As we did with the Select Board about the same time.<<

We changed “Board of Selectmen” to “Select Board,” and “Selectman” to “Select Board member” by a vote of Town Meeting that amended the Zoning and General bylaws. Did Newton need to change it’s charter to accomplish essentially the same thing?

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 8, 2025 2:33 AM

To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

As I understand it, the only thing Newton did recently was change the name of the Board of Aldermen to the City Council. As we did with the Select Board about the same time.

On 6/6/2025 7:39 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (617) 240-3205
>
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
>
> On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.

- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi, Mike

I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.

Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.

One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some

of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the

Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
On Behalf Of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>

Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image002.jpg>

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as “research,” was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for “substantial” work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the Moderator’s Committee.”

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for

improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM

<brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden
TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's

do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this

discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want!

Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16

Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

<image002.jpg>

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io>
To:	Jonathan Margolis
Cc:	Lynda Roseman; Andrew Fischer; A. Joseph Ross; BrooklineTMMA
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date:	Sunday, June 8, 2025 12:08:25 PM

This is precisely why there need to be several forums over the next year about the why, what, and how of a charter commission process. To clear up a few things from what Andrew posted, here's how it works:

The charter commission is elected in a binary Yes/No vote of whether to form the commission. The question on the ballot is: "Shall Brookline elect a charter commission to form a charter for Brookline?"

If elected, that body will study the question of what's working and what's not in Brookline's structure, conduct a public process to explore and debate the many options available for its improvement, and from that work draft *a single proposal* for a Brookline charter. That proposal (assuming it passes muster with the AG), is then put to the voters for a yes/no vote.

The Home Rule Charter process does not involve the state legislature at all. It is entirely citizen/voter-driven.

So Andrew is right that the charter commission itself does not make a binary choice, far from it given the many variants/permutations of both town and city structures to consider. But their job is to make sense of all of that and forge a proposal that reflects their best judgment of what will meet the aspirations, wants, and needs of Brookline and then to give just one proposal to the voters.

Since Brookline has never had a Charter Commission, it might be helpful to compare it to something we have had a lot of experience with: an Override Study Committee. While its members are not elected like a charter commission, an OSC is charged with looking at the financial needs and wants of the town, debating what's needed financially to meet those needs, and then making a recommendation for an override question to be put to the voters. OSCs frequently have majority and minority opinions and reports as a result of their deliberations (as do Charter Commissions), and there's almost always a Yes and a No campaign for an override (as there is for charter proposals), but the question to the voters is binary: approve the override or defeat it.

Hope this is helpful clarification,
Rebecca

Rebecca Stone (she/her)
TMM Pct 3
Chair, Brookline City Charter Campaign

Learn more about Brookline's Precinct 3: https://sites.google.com/view/brooklinep3/home/

Learn more about the campaign for a Charter Commission: www.brooklinecitycharter.com

On Jun 8, 2025, at 11:13 AM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Andrew,

Can you cite anything to support your contention that voters would get to approve A, B, C or D, rather than voting Yea or Nay on the commission's recommendation? I would be surprised if that were the case, but I'm prepared to be enlightened.

Jonathan J. Margolis Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 10:58:14 AM EDT, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

If we stop wasting time with “study committees” and actually start the process of exploring change, we will elect a charter commission. The charter commission is an elected body that will not be making a binary choice but will present a set of options that may include changes to our town form of government, or adopting any of the various forms of city government. Then we will vote again which to approve, from a variety of choices. That will be submitted to the legislature, for its approval and then, I think, another town wide vote.

This process will take several years, and does require us to make any change, but, as it will take several years, we should stop wasting time with more “study” committees and get started on the process of exploring whether to change our form of government, and, if so how.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

On Jun 6, 2025, at 7:50 AM, Lynda Roseman via groups.io

<leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

On 6/5/2025 2:07 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io wrote:

> What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.
>
> How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?
>
> Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.

Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

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To: Jonathan Margolis
Cc: leroseman@gmail.com; A. Joseph Ross; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 12:26:11 PM

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617-293-8304

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To: andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: Margolis Jonathan; leroseman@gmail.com; Ross A. Joseph; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 12:37:47 PM

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io>
To: Carlos Ridruejo
Cc: Andrew Fischer; Jonathan Margolis; Lynda Roseman; Ross A. Joseph; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 1:03:14 PM

Ah, a good point Carlos on override questions sometimes being split that way. It's not the same with a charter proposal. Choosing among all the options on behalf of the voters who elect them is the job of the charter commission, and their charge is to come up with a single proposal that voters can compare/contrast with the status quo and either accept or reject.

Rebecca
TMM3

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: baswolfe@aol.com
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Brookline Neighborhood Alliance Annual Meeting Monday, June 16
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 1:05:52 PM
Attachments: Embedded0f6a397b156e4965ad094e838408087e.png

The Brookline Neighborhood Alliance's Annual Meeting will take place on Monday, June 16th in the Select Board's Hearing Room on the sixth floor in Town Hall. Light refreshments will be offered at 6:30 pm, and the meeting will begin at 7:00 pm.

The business portion of the meeting, which includes the election of Executive Board members and BNA officers, will be followed by the presentation of BNA Leadership Awards.

This year's awardees are:

Rachel Silverman and Thrifty Threads for working to cultivate community, promote sustainability, and foster supportive connections within Brookline and beyond.

Griggs Park Neighborhood Association for its work to improve stewardship of Griggs Park, build community, and beautify Brookline.

Arthur Conquest for his long-standing and tireless work and advocacy on behalf of Brookline Adult and Community Education.

Special BNA Service Awards to Lee Cooke-Childs and John Bassett



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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Carlos Ridruejo; stonewalt@mac.com
Cc: Andrew Fischer; Lynda Roseman; Ross A. Joseph; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 2:20:09 PM

I would just note that the Override Study Committee was not elected in a town-wide campaign involving politicking and contributions. Whether that's good or ill I leave to you.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 01:03:14 PM EDT, Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io> wrote:

Ah, a good point Carlos on override questions sometimes being split that way. It's not the same with a charter proposal. Choosing among all the options on behalf of the voters who elect them is the job of the charter commission, and their charge is to come up with a single proposal that voters can compare/contrast with the status quo and either accept or reject.

Rebecca
TMM3

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> Rebecca,
> As you know sometimes, when voting for overrides, the voters are given the choice of voting different levels of funding as in 2023. It was not an just an up or down vote but rather a yes to some, yes to more or no to either.
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> > Jon

I think Rebecca clarified quite well for me.

Andrew

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

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On 6/5/2025 2:07 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io wrote:

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kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

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A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
To: A Joseph Ross; leroseman@gmail.com; jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 3:14:31 PM

Just to be clear about this issue, Charter Commission candidates are not required to run on a slate but in practice they most often do.

Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
Sent: Sunday, June 8, 2025 8:32 AM
To: A Joseph Ross <joe@attorneyross.com>; leroseman@gmail.com <leroseman@gmail.com>
Cc: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com <jonathanjgolden@gmail.com>; brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission

No.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct.7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 08:16:55 AM EDT, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Does anyone know: Do candidates for Charter Commission necessarily run as a slate?
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

> On Jun 8, 2025, at 12:13 AM, A Joseph Ross <joe@attorneyross.com> wrote:

It will be a binary choice when we get to voting: A charter commission or no charter commission; adopt the charter produced by the Charter Commission or reject it. What we have to do is make sure that if we have a charter commission, there is a progressive, forward-looking Town proposal on the table.

On 6/6/2025 10:26 AM, Jonathan Margolis wrote:

The problem--to me--is that the leading proponents of charter change have made it

crystal-clear that they believe Brookline should become a city. We might, then, expect them to push for exactly the binary choice that Jonathan decries. And as those with the most money are likely to weigh in for the same outcome, a binary choice is all we are likely to see presented to voters, at least by those with the most resources to argue the case.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 08:15:43 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I agree as well that this should not be a binary choice. The good news is that the process does not need to be framed or conducted as a binary choice between city and town. Should the charter commission question reach the ballot, I imagine that candidates will take all kinds of positions about the future of our municipality. A well run charter commission will take into consideration multiple models of town government and city government before bringing a proposal to the voters. Most importantly, at every step of the process, Brookline voters will decide whether or not to proceed.

I also agree with Joe that we should look for ways to improve our current system of government as the charter process will take years to unfold. I thank the leadership of our Town Moderator Neil Wishinsky who has modeled improved communication and transparency with Town Meeting to the benefit of Town Meeting Members and the public alike.

Best wishes to all for a restful and restorative summer,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:50 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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> **To:** brooklinetmma@groups.io
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: BrooklineTMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Home Rule Amendment and Home Rule Procedures Act
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 4:43:11 PM

If anyone is interested in reading the operative laws, here are links to Article LXXXIX of the Amendments to the State Constitution (the Home Rule Amendment) and Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 43B (the Home Rule Procedures Act):

https://malegislature.gov/Laws/Constitution (Search for Aricle LXXXIX)

https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter43B

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: Rebecca Stone; Carlos Ridruejo
Cc: Andrew Fischer; Jonathan Margolis; Lynda Roseman; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 4:50:34 PM

Apparently a charter commission can submit more than one proposal. See Chapter 43B, Section 11 https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter43B/Section11

On 6/8/2025 1:02 PM, Rebecca Stone wrote:

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Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM
On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of

what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents"; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like "the tradeoffs with each alternative"; and (3) for its management, "an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly

repressive measures, until it
becomes a source of terror
to all its citizens and creates
a country where everyone
lives in fear.”
– *Harry S. Truman*

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A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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– *Harry S. Truman*

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Margolis
Cc: Jonathan Golden; Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 5:59:52 PM

Jonathan

I see the difference between the suburban town with a population of ~50,000 that Brookline was from 1950 until 2020 and a much more urban municipality now at ~65,000 with increasing growth pressure that is making it increasingly unaffordable for the people that live and work here. We are not in control of the increasing growth and costs, both to residents and homeowners and to the municipality, Our town government is underfunded and unable to address the needs and demands of our citizenry.

This warrants looking at the form of governance — objectively — and looking at how to address our current situation.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 7, 2025, at 11:27 AM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.
>
> To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.
>
> The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205

Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io

<jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.

Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.

Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.

    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be

much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide.

I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.
>
> But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).
>
> But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting.

And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to

defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<
>
> What the Committee touted as "research,"

was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for “substantial” work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title “Reports of the Moderator’s Committee.”

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn’t require study or discussion, and makes no mention of “improvement.” The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and

substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their

explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--

Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io>
To: Ross A. Joseph
Cc: Carlos Ridruejo; Andrew Fischer; Jonathan Margolis; Lynda Roseman; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 6:02:28 PM

Joe,
I would want to check this with Collins or another expert on 43B, but my understanding of that provision has always been that the "separate submission of proposed revisions" is referring to recommendations of a commission that is revising/amending a few aspects of an existing charter, rather than adopting a new charter in full, as would be the case in Brookline.

> "The question of adopting a charter or revising a charter as recommended by a charter commission shall be submitted to the voters as a single question unless the report of the charter commission provides for the separate submission of proposed revisions."

Best,
Rebecca
TMM3

> On Jun 8, 2025, at 4:50 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Apparently a charter commission can submit more than one proposal. See Chapter 43B, Section 11 https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter43B/Section11
>
> On 6/8/2025 1:02 PM, Rebecca Stone wrote:
>
> > Ah, a good point Carlos on override questions sometimes being split that way. It's not the same with a charter proposal. Choosing among all the options on behalf of the voters who elect them is the job of the charter commission, and their charge is to come up with a single proposal that voters can compare/contrast with the status quo and either accept or reject.
> >
> > Rebecca
> > TMM3
> >
> > > On Jun 8, 2025, at 12:37 PM, Carlos Ridruejo via groups.io <carlos=caridossa.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Rebecca,
> > > As you know sometimes, when voting for overrides, the

voters are given the choice of voting different levels of funding as in 2023. It was not an just an up or down vote but rather a yes to some, yes to more or no to either.

Couldn't the commission give the voters different choices for a city or town form of government?

Carlos Ridruejo
P14

> On Jun 8, 2025, at 12:26, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Jon
>
> I think Rebecca clarified quite well for me.
>
> Andrew
>
> Andrew Fischer
> Town Meeting Member
> Precinct 13
> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> 617-293-8304
>
> > On Jun 8, 2025, at 11:13 AM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
> >
> > Andrew,
> >
> > Can you cite anything to support your contention that voters would get to approve A, B, C or D, rather than voting Yea or Nay on the commission's recommendation? I would be surprised if that were the case, but I'm prepared to be enlightened.
> >
> > Jonathan J. Margolis Pct. 7 and Library Trustee

Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 10:58:14 AM EDT, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

If we stop wasting time with “study committees” and actually start the process of exploring change, we will elect a charter commission. The charter commission is an elected body that will not be making a binary choice but will present a set of options that may include changes to our town form of government, or adopting any of the various forms of city government. Then we will vote again which to approve, from a variety of choices. That will be submitted to the legislature, for its approval and then, I think, another town wide vote.

This process will take several years, and does require us to make any change, but, as it will take several years, we should stop wasting time with more “study” committees and get started on the process of exploring whether to change our form of government, and, if so how.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 6, 2025, at 7:50 AM, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io
On Behalf Of Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

On 6/5/2025 2:07 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io wrote:

> What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be

between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.

How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its

own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?

Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.

Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

> Regrett
> ably, I
> will not

be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am– not even a little regrettably— hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.

In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in

which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.

No Action on WA30

It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been

discussed, much less followed.

I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.

As to the Petitioners' Post Script/ Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He nonetheless

completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful

public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Adden

dum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the

structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but

maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assemb

ly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents”; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like “the tradeoffs with each alternative”; and (3) for its management, “an organization focused on local democratic renewal,” specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the

aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill,
Brookline, MA

===
"Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is

down the path of
increasingly
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measures, until it
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all its citizens and
creates a country
where everyone
lives in fear.”
– *Harry S.*
Truman

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.”
– *Harry S. Truman*

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Andrew Fischer
Cc: Jonathan Golden; Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 7:42:45 PM

The issues you raise would not necessarily be improved by a change from town to city. They might well be made worse. As I've observed before, systematic change is usually overrated as a solution for problems.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 05:59:50 PM EDT, Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan

I see the difference between the suburban town with a population of ~50,000 that Brookline was from 1950 until 2020 and a much more urban municipality now at ~65,000 with increasing growth pressure that is making it increasingly unaffordable for the people that live and work here. We are not in control of the increasing growth and costs, both to residents and homeowners and to the municipality, Our town government is underfunded and unable to address the needs and demands of our citizenry.

This warrants looking at the form of governance — objectively — and looking at how to address our current situation.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 7, 2025, at 11:27 AM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.
>
> The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.

To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.

The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

> Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."
>
> First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our

form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
  - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
  - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
  - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does

not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
> Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.
>
> The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the

list, so here is my “two cents” worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don’t like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a “do over.”

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.
>
> When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate

study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I

found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior***

to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an

objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us

even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: Rebecca Stone
Cc: Carlos Ridruejo; Andrew Fischer; Jonathan Margolis; Lynda Roseman; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 7:55:23 PM

Where does the statute say that?

On 6/8/2025 6:02 PM, Rebecca Stone wrote:

> Joe,
> I would want to check this with Collins or another expert on 43B, but my understanding of that provision has always been that the "separate submission of proposed revisions" is referring to recommendations of a commission that is revising/amending a few aspects of an existing charter, rather than adopting a new charter in full, as would be the case in Brookline.
>
> > "The question of adopting a charter or revising a charter as recommended by a charter commission shall be submitted to the voters as a single question unless the report of the charter commission provides for the separate submission of proposed revisions."
>
> Best,
> Rebecca
> TMM3
>
> > On Jun 8, 2025, at 4:50 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Apparently a charter commission can submit more than one proposal. See Chapter 43B, Section 11 https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter43B/Section11
> >
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Carlos Ridruejo
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Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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This process will take several years, and does require us to make any change, but, as it will take several years, we should stop wasting time with more “study” committees and get started on the process of exploring whether to change our form of government, and, if so how.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose.
One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

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What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for

improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion.

The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.

How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be

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Should
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Meeting
meet
more
regularly?

Are
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to
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Could
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of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.

No Action on WA30

It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo

its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.

I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.

As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations,

and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He nonetheless completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the

inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

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Bettina
Neuefeind

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*For
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conflict
with
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Matthew Caldeira via groups.io <matthew.caldeira=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] FW: An invitation from your Congressman
Date: Monday, June 9, 2025 11:00:16 AM

In case anyone is not aware of this zoom tonight and is interested...

Thank you!
Matthew Caldeira TMM-9

-------- Original message --------
From: Jake Auchincloss <MA04JA.Outreach@mail.house.gov>
Date: 6/9/25 10:29 AM
Subject: An invitation from your Congressman



Hi neighbor,

On Monday, June 9, I'll be hosting a Virtual Update and Q&A with Protect Democracy United, a non-partisan advocacy organization. This is an opportunity for you to raise questions and hear updates on what I'm doing to represent the district's values & priorities.

Democracy Edition: Virtual Update and Q&A with Congressman Jake Auchincloss

and Justin Vail from Protect Democracy

Monday, June 9, 2025
7:15 pm – 8:15 pm

RSVP for the Zoom link HERE

**News media and other individuals may record or film the event and thereby capture, photograph, or record my voice, image, or likeness (the "Recordings"). By participating in this event, I agree to hold the Congressman, his Office, and his employees, agents, legal representatives, and those acting on his behalf harmless against any liability, loss, or damage (including reasonable attorney's fees) caused by or arising from the Recordings. By registering for this event, attendees also grant our office permission to send you future communications and updates.

Sincerely,

Image

Jake Auchincloss

Image Image Image Image

WASHINGTON
15 Independence Avenue SE
1524 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-5931

NEWTON
29 Crafts Street
Suite 375
Newton, MA 02458
Phone: (617) 332-3333

ATTLEBORO
8 North Main Street
Suite 200
Attleboro, MA 02703
Phone: (508) 431-1110

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Roger Lipson via groups.io <rlipson=brooklinelegal.com@groups.io>
To: Rebecca Stone; joe@attorneyross.com
Cc: Carlos Ridruejo; Andrew Fischer; Jonathan Margolis; Lynda Roseman; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Monday, June 9, 2025 12:08:10 PM

I agree with Rebecca's interpretation. However, it would have been better to have placed the "proposed revisions" language in a separate clause.

Roger Lipson
TMM
Pct. 14

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
Sent: Sunday, June 8, 2025 7:55 PM
To: Rebecca Stone <stonewalt@mac.com>
Cc: Carlos Ridruejo <carlos@caridossa.com>; Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com>; Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>; Lynda Roseman <leroseman@gmail.com>; BrooklineTMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
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Where does the statute say that?

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Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in

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On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

> Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am– not even a little regrettably — hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children.

I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.

In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.

No Action on WA30

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Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.

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Recommendations of WA31

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commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Monday, June 9, 2025 3:01:07 PM

I think the language in the second sentence of the last paragraph of Section 11 supports my interpretation.

But I agree this could have been drafted with much greater clarity.

On 6/9/2025 12:08 PM, Roger Lipson wrote:

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> > Rebecca
> > TMM3

On Jun 8, 2025, at 4:50 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:

Apparently a charter commission can submit more than one proposal. See Chapter 43B, Section 11 https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter43B/Section11

On 6/8/2025 1:02 PM, Rebecca Stone wrote:

> Ah, a good point Carlos on override questions sometimes being split that way. It's not the same with a charter proposal. Choosing among all the options on behalf of the voters who elect them is the job of the charter commission, and their charge is to come up with a single proposal that voters can compare/contrast with the status quo and either accept or reject.
>
> Rebecca
> TMM3
>
> > On Jun 8, 2025, at 12:37 PM, Carlos Ridruejo via groups.io <carlos=caridossa.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Rebecca,
> > As you know sometimes, when voting for overrides, the voters are given the choice of voting different levels of funding as in 2023. It was not an just an up or down vote but rather a yes to some, yes to more or no to either.
> >
> > Couldn't the commission give the voters different choices for a city or town form of government?
> >
> > Carlos Ridruejo
> > P14
> >
> > > On Jun 8, 2025, at 12:26, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Jon

I think Rebecca clarified quite well for me.

Andrew

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 8, 2025, at 11:13 AM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
> Andrew,
>
> Can you cite anything to support your contention that voters would get to approve A, B, C or D, rather than voting Yea or Nay on the commission's recommendation? I would be surprised if that were the case, but I'm prepared to be enlightened.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis Pct. 7 and Library Trustee

Brookline,
MA 02446
(617) 240-
3205
*Crede Cum
Videris
Pecuniam*

On Sunday,
June 8, 2025
at 10:58:14
AM EDT,
Andrew
Fischer via
groups.io
<andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
wrote:

If we stop
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and actually
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will elect a
charter
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The charter
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an elected
body that will
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a binary
choice but will
present a set
of options that
may include
changes to
our town form
of
government,
or adopting
any of the
various forms
of city
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Then we will
vote again
which to
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a variety of choices. That will be submitted to the legislature, for its approval and then, I think, another town wide vote.

This process will take several years, and does require us to make any change, but, as it will take several years, we should stop wasting time with more “study” committees and get started on the process of exploring whether to change our form of government, and, if so how.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 6, 2025, at 7:50 AM, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One

good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

On 6/5/2025 2:07 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io wrote:

> What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could

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This
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and
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No
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In
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changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by

the
time
I
lost
the
election
in
2017.
Now,
I
return
to
find
that
Advisory
Committee
roll
calls
are
routine.

How
else
can
Town
Meeting
be
made
better?
Like
most
legislative
bodies,
should
Town
Meeting
elect
its
own
presiding
officer?
Should
we
be
able,
to
overrule
rulings
of
the

chair?
Should
Town
Meeting
meet
more
regularly?

Are
there
ways
to
improve
the
way
the
executive
branch
operates?
Could
the
Select
Board
do
a
better
job
of
leading
the
Town
if
it
didn't
have
to
spend
so
much
time
on
routine
licensing?
Is
it
time
to
upgrade
the
Town

Administrator
to
a
full-
fledged
Town
Manager?
A
campaign
to
keep
Town
Meeting
does
not
have
to
be
a
campaign
to
stand
pat.

Regrettably,
the
Moderator's
Committee's
bias
in
favor
of
a
city
kept
it
from
even
trying
to
look
at
these
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On
6/5/2025
8:41
AM,

Bettina
Neuefeind
via groups.io wrote:

> Regrettably,
> I
> will
> not
> be
> at
> tonight's
> Town
> Meeting
> because
> I
> am–
> not
> even
> a
> little
> regrettably
> —
> hosting
> family
> and
> festivities
> to
> celebrate
> the
> high
> school
> graduation
> of
> one
> of
> my
> (young
> adult)
> children.
> I
> share
> my
> thoughts
> here
> in
> lieu
> of
> rising
> to
> speak
> in
> the
> auditorium.
>
> In
> the
> spirit
> of
> disclosure
> of
> perceived
> conflict
> of
> interest,

I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.

No Action on WA30

It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-

binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.

I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.

As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed.

He nonetheless completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful

public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and

coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM
On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared

a
(ninth)
report
-
-
by
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Prof.
Lawrence
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who's
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of
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due,
we
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to
a
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conflict
with
a
class
he
teaches.
We
recall
no
discussion
about
accommodating
that,
but
maybe
that
happened.
In
any
event,
his
"Crafting
a
Resident-
Informed
Charter
Process"
is
huge
a
breath
of
fresh
air,
at
least
conceptually
if
not
in
the
(unknown

to
us)
practicalities
of
its
details.
For
the
first
time
12
months,
there
will
now
be
serious
discussion
of
what's
really
called
"research."
On
quick
review,
he
seems
to
propose
essentially
(1)
a
"resident
assembly…
,
a
random
and
representative
selection
of
Brookline
residents";
(2)
to
survey
Brookline
residents
about
available
governmental
alternatives,
like
"the
tradeoffs
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and
(3)
for
its
management,

"an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

-
-

A. Joseph Ross

Chestnut
Hill,
Brookline,
MA

===
“Once
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Harry S. Truman

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
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– *Harry S. Truman*

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

--
A. Joseph Ross
Precinct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA
===
"The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person who is doing it."
-- *Chinese proverb*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Michael A. Burstein via groups.io <TMMBurstein=mabfan.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: [Special] [brooklinetmma] TMMA LIST ADMIN NOTE
Date: Monday, June 9, 2025 4:02:36 PM

Folks,

As I have reminded the members of this list repeatedly, if you have an administrative issue, such as not receiving emails or not being able to send emails to this list, you should NOT email only me. Please, please email brooklinetmma+owner@groups.io to reach ALL the administrators of the list.

I also remind people that my only role and that of the admins is to manage technical issues. We do not moderate the list. If you have an issue with another TMM's posts, you should contact that TMM and/or the Board of the TMMA.

Thanks,
Michael

--
Michael A. Burstein
Brookline Library Trustee and Town Meeting Member (Precinct 12)
Pronouns: He/Him/His

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA listserv
Subject: [brooklinetmma] FW: Coolidge Corner art exhibit/market this past Saturday June 7th - question
Date: Monday, June 9, 2025 5:01:38 PM

Colleagues – what promised to be a big and impressive art exhibit/market this past Saturday in the Babcock Street parking lot was apparently a wash out due to the weather. There were many portable booths for the exhibitors and their artwork but it (and the artists' sales) came to naught due to the downpour. I never saw any references to a rain date; and it didn't seem that there were plans to move to an indoor venue (perhaps like the FRR gym, assuming that would have been large enough and also assuming there were sufficient funds to support that). Done right I think it could have been a good thing for the artists and for the town, and I'm particularly sorry for the artists who went to all the trouble (and, perhaps, expense). Does anyone have any more insight into this?

Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To:	stonewalt@mac.com
Cc:	"BrooklineTMMA"; "Brookline PAX"
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date:	Tuesday, June 10, 2025 10:53:27 AM

>> If elected, that body ***will*** **study the question of what's working and what's not** in Brookline's structure, **conduct a public process to explore and debate the many options available for its improvement**, …<< (emphasis added)

Quite fanciful and not at all what's demanded by statute.

>>The Home Rule Charter process … is entirely citizen/voter-driven.<<

Except for the part where it's driven by the (perhaps biased) majority of a charter commission.

>>… their job is to make sense of all of that and forge a proposal that reflects their best judgment of what will meet the aspirations, wants, and needs of Brookline …<<

Again, quite fanciful and not at all what's demanded by statute.

>>… an [Override Study Committee] is charged with looking at the financial needs and wants of the town, debating what's needed financially to meet those needs, and then making a recommendation for an override question to be put to the voters.<<

I'm aware of no OSC that was charged with "looking at the financial needs and wants of the town." Rather, they've done significant analysis of revenue and spending projections, projected school enrollment and the like, and evaluated structural spending, generally concluding, by the way, that there's no significant inefficiency or waste. OSC's have not been needs v wants policy committees. The job of "right-sizing" an override, large enough to fund what's needed/wanted, yet small enough to pass, falls to the Select Board.

>>… there's almost always a Yes and a No campaign for an override … but the question to the voters is binary: approve the override or defeat it.<<

Overrides can be presented to the voters in tiered, Goldilocks fashion. While the individual questions are binary, the aggregate of choices offered to the voters is not.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Rebecca Stone via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 8, 2025 12:08 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: Lynda Roseman <leroseman@gmail.com>; Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com>; A. Joseph Ross <joe@attorneyross.com>; BrooklineTMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission

This is precisely why there need to be several forums over the next year about the why, what, and how of a charter commission process. To clear up a few things from what Andrew posted, here's how it works:

The charter commission is elected in a binary Yes/No vote of whether to form the commission. The question on the ballot is: "Shall Brookline elect a charter commission to form a charter for Brookline?"

If elected, that body will study the question of what's working and what's not in Brookline's structure, conduct a public process to explore and debate the many options available for its improvement, and from that work draft *a single proposal* for a Brookline charter. That proposal (assuming it passes muster with the AG), is then put to the voters for a yes/no vote.

The Home Rule Charter process does not involve the state legislature at all. It is entirely citizen/voter-driven.

So Andrew is right that the charter commission itself does not make a binary choice, far from it given the many variants/permutations of both town and city structures to consider. But their job is to make sense of all of that and forge a proposal that reflects their best judgment of what will meet the aspirations, wants, and needs of Brookline and then to give just one proposal to the voters.

Since Brookline has never had a Charter Commission, it might be helpful to compare it to something we have had a lot of experience with: an Override Study Committee. While its members are not elected like a charter commission, an OSC is charged with looking at the financial needs and wants of the town, debating what's needed financially to meet those needs, and then making a recommendation for an override question to be put to the voters. OSCs frequently have majority and minority opinions and reports as a result of their deliberations (as do Charter Commissions), and there's almost always a Yes and a No campaign for an override (as there is for charter proposals), but the question to the voters is binary: approve the override or defeat it.

Hope this is helpful clarification,
Rebecca

Rebecca Stone (she/her)

TMM Pct 3
Chair, Brookline City Charter Campaign

Learn more about Brookline's Precinct 3: https://sites.google.com/view/brooklinep3/home/

Learn more about the campaign for a Charter Commission: www.brooklinecitycharter.com

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Andrew,

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Jonathan J. Margolis Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 10:58:14 AM EDT, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

If we stop wasting time with "study committees" and actually start the process of exploring change, we will elect a charter commission. The charter commission is an elected body that will not be making a binary choice but will present a set of options that may include changes to our town form of government, or adopting any of the various forms of city government. Then we will vote again which to approve, from a variety of choices. That will be submitted to the legislature, for its approval and then, I think, another town wide vote.

This process will take several years, and does require us to make any change, but, as it will take several years, we should stop wasting time with more "study" committees and get started on the

process of exploring whether to change our form of government, and, if so how.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

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> What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.
>
> How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair?

Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?

Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.

Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

> Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am–not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.
>
> In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.
>
> **No Action on WA30**
>
> It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.
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you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially (1) a "resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents"; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like "the tradeoffs with each alternative"; and (3) for its management, "an organization focused on local democratic renewal," specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass' Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG's "Informational Documents" page.14]

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A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: selectboard@brooklinema.gov; TMMA; Brookline Pax
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Fw: Town Hall sculpture
Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2025 5:05:57 PM

This is good! More public art please! First painted utility boxes, then giant turkeys, and now this elaborate and well made sculpture in front of Town Hall. My thanks to whoever is responsible for this renaissance. And who is responsible?

John Bassett
p6

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 04:52:45 PM EDT
Subject: Town Hall sculpture



Sent from AOL on Android

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 7:44:30 PM

Not necessarily. If elected, the charter commission will proceed in whatever way it determines, and if it wants to proceed exactly the same way as the Moderator's Committee proceeded, it can do so. It doesn't have to have evidence for its findings, and if it chooses to proceed directly to drafting a city charter, it can do so. It will study whatever it chooses to study in whatever way it chooses to study it.

On 6/10/2025 10:53 AM, Neil Gordon via groups.io wrote:

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Cc: Lynda Roseman <leroseman@gmail.com>; Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com>; A. Joseph Ross <joe@attorneyross.com>; BrooklineTMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
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Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
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No Action on WA30

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 8:40:25 PM

Joe — I appreciate the important information you are adding here, but in the future please, please, please follow the rules and add your full name and Precinct to your posts on this list.

Thank you.

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To: Jonathan Klein
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] City vs Town and a Charter Commission
Date: Thursday, June 12, 2025 1:36:39 AM

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If elected, that body will study the question of what's working and what's not in Brookline's structure, conduct a public process to explore and debate the many options available for its improvement, and from that work draft *a single proposal*for a Brookline charter. That proposal (assuming it passes muster with the AG), is then put to the voters for a yes/no vote.

The Home Rule Charter process does not involve the state legislature at all. It is entirely citizen/voter-driven.

So Andrew is right that the charter commission itself does not make a binary choice, far from it given the many variants/permutations of both town and city structures to consider. But their job is to make sense of all of that and forge a proposal that reflects their best judgment of what will meet the aspirations, wants, and needs of Brookline and then to give just one proposal to the voters.

Since Brookline has never had a Charter Commission, it might be helpful to compare it to something we have had a lot of experience with: an Override Study Committee. While its members are not elected like a charter commission, an OSC is

charged with looking at the financial needs and wants of the town, debating what's needed financially to meet those needs, and then making a recommendation for an override question to be put to the voters. OSCs frequently have majority and minority opinions and reports as a result of their deliberations (as do Charter Commissions), and there's almost always a Yes and a No campaign for an override (as there is for charter proposals), but the question to the voters is binary: approve the override or defeat it.

Hope this is helpful clarification,
Rebecca

Rebecca Stone (she/her)
TMM Pct 3
Chair, Brookline City Charter Campaign

Learn more about Brookline's Precinct 3: https://sites.google.com/view/brooklinep3/home/

Learn more about the campaign for a Charter Commission: www.brooklinecitycharter.com

> On Jun 8, 2025, at 11:13 AM, Jon Margolis via groups.io<jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Andrew,
>
> Can you cite anything to support your contention that voters would get to approve A, B, C or D, rather than voting Yea or Nay on the commission's recommendation? I would be surprised if that were the case, but

I'm prepared to be enlightened.

Jonathan J. Margolis Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 10:58:14 AM EDT, Andrew Fischer via groups.io<andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

If we stop wasting time with “study committees” and actually start the process of exploring change, we will elect a charter commission. The charter commission is an elected body that will not be making a binary choice but will present a set of options that may include changes to our town form of government, or adopting any of the various forms of city government. Then we will vote again which to approve, from a variety of choices. That will be submitted to the legislature, for its approval and then, I think, another town wide vote.

This process will take several years, and does require us to make any change, but, as it will take several years, we should stop wasting time with more “study” committees and get started on the process of exploring whether to change our form of government, and, if so how.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 6, 2025, at 7:50 AM, Lynda Roseman via groups.io<leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I agree with Joe Ross that this should not be framed as a binary choice between city and town.
> Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 2:17 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on WA 30, and for your consideration on WA 31

Well, I didn't get to speak, but this is the gist of what I wanted to say. If the voters have to choose between a dynamic new idea and "keeping the status quo," the status quo is likely to lose. One good thing that came out of the Moderator's Committee was the excellent report that Sandy Gadsby wrote on the advantages of Town Meeting. But its title "In Defense of the Status Quo" is unfortunate. I'd rather see a title like "The Case for Town Meeting."

On 6/5/2025 2:07 PM, Joe Ross via groups.io wrote:

> What I had hoped the Moderator's Committee would do was to look at ways that we could improve our Town Meeting form of government. This shouldn't be between people who want a city and people who want to stand pat. No form of government is perfect, and there is always room for improvement. In the 8 years that I have been away from Town Meeting, much has changed. Years ago, I pushed for getting a roll-call of Select Board and Advisory Committee votes on each Article in the Combined Reports. The Select Board agreed and even started doing it before Town Meeting voted on the motion. The Advisory Committee

resisted, and it still wasn't happening by the time I lost the election in 2017. Now, I return to find that Advisory Committee roll calls are routine.

How else can Town Meeting be made better? Like most legislative bodies, should Town Meeting elect its own presiding officer? Should we be able, to overrule rulings of the chair? Should Town Meeting meet more regularly?

Are there ways to improve the way the executive branch operates? Could the Select Board do a better job of leading the Town if it didn't have to spend so much time on routine licensing? Is it time to upgrade the Town Administrator to a full-fledged Town Manager? A campaign to keep Town Meeting does not have to be a campaign to stand pat.

Regrettably, the Moderator's Committee's bias in favor of a city kept it from even trying to look at these issues.

On 6/5/2025 8:41 AM, Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io wrote:

> Regrettably, I will not be at tonight's Town Meeting because I am–not even a little regrettably—hosting family and festivities to celebrate the high school graduation of

one of my (young adult) children. I share my thoughts here in lieu of rising to speak in the auditorium.

In the spirit of disclosure of perceived conflict of interest, I am married to Lawrence Lessig. The directions in which that might influence my thoughts below are anyone's guess.

No Action on WA30

It appears to me that reports of the demise of Town Meeting as a result of this committee's findings are greatly exaggerated, and it is premature to call to reconvene the committee to redo its work before the non-binding, wide-ranging findings of the committee have even been discussed, much less followed.

I urge you to join me in voting No Action on WA 30.

As to the Petitioners' Post Script/Addendum*, I can share that Lawrence Lessig indeed had a structural scheduling conflict with the standing meeting time resulting from his teaching obligations, and an alternative meeting time was not discussed. He

nonetheless completed significant work in his role on the committee, which I urge you to review and consider under WA 31, below.

Support for the Citizen Engagement Recommendations of WA31

Notwithstanding the substantial membership of Town Meeting, far too few residents of Brookline know about or engage deeply in the inner workings of its governance. In order to have a meaningful public conversation about our Town governance, we must include many more of its residents.

With thanks to the MCFG for all of its work, I commend to you to Lawrence Lessig's Citizen Engagement Report (Final Report), Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process (Interim Report) and Readings on Complementing Systems of Representation (Addendum).

Very much against my own interests in reducing my partner and coparent's volunteer commitments, I urge you to take you up

on his offer to personally work to fund the community engagement initiatives he describes.

Bettina Neuefeind

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, who both enjoys Town Meeting and acknowledges the structural challenges our local governance faces

*For reference:

POSTSCRIPT/ADDENDUM
On the day this was finalized, Feb. 24th, appeared a (ninth) report -- by MCFG's, Prof. Lawrence Lessig, who's missed most of the meetings due, we think, to a scheduling conflict with a class he teaches. We recall no discussion about accommodating that, but maybe that happened. In any event, his "Crafting a Resident-Informed Charter Process" is huge a breath of fresh air, at least conceptually if not in the (unknown to us) practicalities of its details. For the first time 12 months, there will now be serious discussion of what's really called "research." On quick review, he seems to propose essentially

(1) a “resident assembly… , a random and representative selection of Brookline residents”; (2) to survey Brookline residents about available governmental alternatives, like “the tradeoffs with each alternative”; and (3) for its management, “an organization focused on local democratic renewal,” specifically UnifyAmerica. Regardless of what specific entity, his overall thrust is analogous to the aforementioned 1988 LWV study. And, a Select Board Member recently floated another entity, UMass’ Collins Center for Public Management, which has three (of the seven) documents on MCFG’s “Informational Documents” page.14]

--
A. Joseph Ross
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror

to all its citizens and creates
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Liz Linder; TMMA; Brookline Pax
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Town Hall sculpture
Date: Thursday, June 12, 2025 9:10:00 AM

Thanks to Liz Linder for researching this!
John Bassett

On Wednesday, June 11, 2025 at 11:51:53 PM EDT, Liz Linder <liz@lizlinder.com> wrote:

> Thanks! That's great to know. I actually received one of the Mass Cultural Council grants in early 2020, but learned about it right when we were first shut down by COVID and I couldn't follow through on the work. Nice to be selected however!
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> This is what I learned:
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> This hand sculpture installation is another one of our Brookline Art Makes Community (BAMC) projects. The artwork is titled "Hand in Hand" and the hands were casted by artistSchuyler Dawson. They are working on signage to put out, but the hands are of Brookline town employees and is meant to symbolize all of the municipal hands across Town that keep Brookline working together. This artwork is part of the "Art Around Town" interactive and engaging public art program. Other BAMC programs include "Boxes Around Town", "Turkeys Around Town", and "Murals Around Town".
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> This was all done using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. In 2022, the Select Board allocated $225,000 to fund public art and place making activations in Brookline's commercial areas. Working with a steering committee of representatives from both the Small Business Development Committee (SBDC) and Brookline Commission for the Arts (BCA) helped guide this staff-led project along. Calls for Art for the different programs were issued and a Selection Committee voted and chose the artists. Now that we all of the ARPA funding allocation has been used, there is no funding for future public art. The BCA is trying to fundraise to keep these very successful programs moving forward, and needs need more funding to commission more public art. Gillian Jackson would know more about the BCA's efforts, they are actively trying to find more sources of funding.
>
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> studio/ 617-232-3202
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makes recommendations for Mass Cultural Council grants.

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> > >
> > > LL
> > >
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John Bassett
p6

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To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 04:52:45 PM EDT
Subject: Town Hall sculpture

<IMG_20250608_154328991.jpg>

Sent from AOL on Android
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: veronique corrdin
Cc: Liz Linder; TMMA; Brookline Pax
Subject: Re: [EGNA]: Re: [brooklinetmma] Town Hall sculpture
Date: Thursday, June 12, 2025 9:16:00 AM

Yes. It was mentioned in the newsletter that Town Administrator Chas Carey just sent. And there are a couple other murals.
John Bassett

On Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 09:11:33 AM EDT, veronique corrdin <veronique.corrdin@gmail.com> wrote:

> Thank you!
> Is the mirror mosaic on the wall of Brookline Bank opposite Santander on Harvard a part of the same project?
>
> On Thu, Jun 12, 2025 at 9:10 AM 'John Bassett' via Emerson Garden Neighborhood Association <egnabrookline@googlegroups.com> wrote:
>
> > Thanks to Liz Linder for researching this!
> > John Bassett
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John

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What is BCAH?

I love this in particular, a little more challenging than the painted turkeys … and am doing a little digging.

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Hi Liz,

I wonder if it's the BCAH. If so, good for them. And the sculpture is good.

John

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Amazing. Thx for sending this around!
I'll check with my people to see who knows… standby!

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John Bassett
p6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: es.blanchard@gmail.com
Cc: liz@lizlinder.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; brooklinepax@groups.io
Subject: Re: [EGNA]: Re: [brooklinetmma] Town Hall sculpture
Date: Thursday, June 12, 2025 10:02:38 AM

Hi Eliza,

I had the same thought. But I like it. And I like knowing what Liz found about its history.

Thanks,
John Bassett

In a message dated 6/12/2025 9:55:46 AM Eastern Daylight Time, es.blanchard@gmail.com writes:

> Dear friends and neighbors,
> I found the sculpture interesting, but with all white hands, it looks a bit ghostly, and monochrome.
> (Originally the Romans and Greeks *painted* their white marble statuary!)
>
> My own aspiration is for all kinds of hands working to make Brookline a more caring, just and nurturing to all place: more colorful and richer for it.
>
> Thank you for listening,
> Eliza Blanchard
> 11 Waverly St.
>
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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jesse Hefter via groups.io <jesse.hefter=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] Spring 2025 Town Meeting Summary Available
Date:	Thursday, June 12, 2025 4:06:44 PM
Attachments:	Newsletter_Spring_Town_Meeting_2025.pdf

Hi:

I have once again summarized the Warrant Articles that were discussed and voted upon at our recent Spring Town Meeting into a format that can be easily shared with your constituents. I utilized the Town Clerk's latest voting counts to ensure the accuracy of the values in the document.

The document is also available online at https://jessehefter.com/townmeeting/, under the "Town Meetings" section on the page.

Thanks,

Jesse
--
Dr. Jesse Hefter
TMM 14
Member, School Committee
Member, Pedestrian Advisory Committee

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BROOKLINE TOWN MEETING

NEWSLETTER: Spring 2025 Town Meeting Highlights

by Jesse Hefter (Town Meeting Member - Precinct 14)
June 10, 2025

Our Spring Town Meeting occurred over four (4) nights in late May and early June 2025. There are various files on our town's website related to this Meeting, but you would need to be a dedicated analyst to pore through all the information spread across multiple documents and supplements.

Accordingly, this Newsletter aims to provide you with the high-level results of what was discussed and how your elected representatives voted overall (the Town website has published a master file with how each Town Meeting Member voted if you wish to see the nitty-gritty details). The Warrant Articles are presented in the order in which Town Meeting discussed them; certain non-voted and procedural articles are not included in this Newsletter.

Property Tax Exemption (Article 7)

Approved (Yes-226; No-0; Abstain-4)

Permit the Town to permanently grant additional property tax relief to approximately 75 qualifying taxpayers (including disabled veterans, blind persons, surviving spouses with low assets, and elderly taxpayers with both low income and low assets) in fiscal year 2026 and subsequent fiscal years until rescinded by Town Meeting. The total exemptions total $37,150.

Electric Vehicle Revolving Fund (Article 8)

Approved (Yes-230; No-1; Abstain-4)

Establish an Electric Vehicle Charging Program Revolving Fund, which segregates the fees collected from town-owned electric vehicle chargers, allowing them to be used in their entirety to cover the costs associated with operating these chargers, including utilities, software, and maintenance.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget (Article 9)

Approved (Yes-217; No-3; Abstain-6)

The FY26 budget required that four items be funded via bonding and were approved: Stormwater Improvements ($500,000), Water System Improvements ($2,000,000), Wastewater System Improvements ($3,000,000), and the Town/School Roof Repair/Replacement Program ($1,400,000). Within the DPW budget, a decision was made to fully outsource garbage collection (not unlike the vast majority of our neighboring cities and towns). The PSB budget was approved at $142,325,953. Total appropriated expenditures were approved for $408,222,486.

Community Preservation Act (Article 10)

Approved (Yes-223; No-1; Abstain-7)

Brookline collects revenue for the Community Preservation Trust Fund via a 1% property tax surcharge and a variable matching contribution from the state. Applications made and approved for 2026 include $500,000 for community housing, $1,319,608 for historic preservation, and $2,717,994 for open space and recreation. Total appropriations for all categories are $4,537,602 spread over 18 projects. One high-priority project is the Larz Anderson Outdoor Ice Rink Design and Public Design Review Process.

Amend the Zoning By-Law for People with Disabilities (Article 14)

Approved (Yes-176; No-43; Abstain-15)

Amend the Town's Zoning By-Law to establish a timely and equitable process for reviewing reasonable accommodation requests under federal and state disability laws.

Amend the Demolition By-Law for People with Disabilities (Article 15)

Approved (Yes-188; No-27; Abstain-20)

Amend the Demolition By-Law to authorize the Building Commissioner to issue Demolition Permits earlier to applicants who have received reasonable accommodations for disabilities related to buildings in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Prohibit the Sale of Foie Gras (Article 20)

Approved (Yes-114; No-78; Abstain-14)

Amend the Town's General By-Laws by adding a new By-Law prohibiting the sale, or offering for sale, of foie gras produced by force-feeding in Brookline, along with a corresponding penalty ($300/day). No farms in Massachusetts produce foie gras.

Brookline as a Sanctuary City for Transgender, Non-binary, and Gender-diverse People (Article 29)

Approved (Yes-203; No-0; Abstain-10)

This **Resolution** asks Town Meeting to affirm Brookline's bylaws and policies governing the protection of gender-diverse individuals. Current bylaw protections for gender-diverse individuals in Brookline include access to gender-affirming healthcare and accommodations in town and schools.

Floodplain Management (Article 12)

Approved (Yes-218; No-0; Abstain-4)

Brookline is required to periodically update its floodplain insurance maps to continue participation in FEMA's (Federal Emergency Management Agency) National Flood Insurance Program. Updated maps are provided by the federal government every 10 years. This Article seeks to:

1. Adopt the updated FEMA Flood Maps.
2. Create a Floodplain Administrator role within the Town (without adding more staff);
3. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to comply with updated floodplain regulations; and
4. Establish a Floodplain Development Permit process for parcels in Floodplain Overlay Districts.

Constable Terms of Office (Article 13)

Approved (Yes-217; No-1; Abstain-2)

This article is a bylaw amendment to remove obsolete language in the bylaw that established staggered terms for Constables.

Bicycle Parking Improvements (Article 16)

Approved (Yes-210; No-4; Abstain-9)

The steady increase in the use of larger bicycles in Brookline has led to a proposal to modify the process for allowing the parking of these vehicles. Accordingly, the proposal is to increase the number of large bicycle parking spaces in new residential construction with eight or more long-term bicycle spaces, decrease the number of regular bicycle spaces within the same total, and increase the bicycle parking requirements in new affordable housing construction to match the number of spaces currently required in other new multi-unit buildings.

Discharging and Carrying of Firearms in Certain Locations (Article 17)

Approved (Yes-219; No-0; Abstain-7)

Following upon earlier firearm restrictions enacted in Brookline in 2023 and 2024, two additional regulations are being introduced. Carrying and discharging a firearm will be prohibited in:

- An establishment that serves alcohol for consumption on-site; and
- A medical/healthcare setting.

There are Supreme Court decisions that uphold these restrictions.

Sustainable Food Containers and Packaging (Article 18)

Approved (Yes-224; No-2; Abstain-5)

This Article seeks to amend existing bylaws related to plastic food packaging. It aims to further restrict such packaging to reduce demand for plastic products in Brookline. Specifically, the changes include:

1. Require all food establishments in Brookline to only provide single-use utensils and single-use condiment containers when requested by the customer;
2. Eliminate the exemption for caterers from the restriction on the usage of non-recyclable, non-biodegradable, and non-compostable products except when necessary to meet food safety rules;
3. Simplify and expand the definition of “caterer”;
4. Further clarify the prohibition against the use of black plastic containers to provide prepared food to customers; and

5. More clearly define which food service ware is prohibited, the terms “biodegradable” and “compostable”.

Sustainable Bags (Article 19)

Approved (Yes-220; No-5; Abstain-5)

Amend an existing bylaw to further reduce demand for plastic products in Brookline. Specifically, eliminate exemptions based on square footage and gross income for retailers and expand the restrictions to restaurants. Furthermore, the article aims to align the definition of a reusable checkout bag with that established by recent Massachusetts legislation.

Create Commission on Thriving Children (Article 21)

Approved (Yes-214; No-0; Abstain-12)

This **Resolution** seeks to support the Department of Health and Human Services in advancing the development of children from birth through high school. This will be accomplished by collaborations across Town departments and non-Town entities that benefit children and youth.

Timely Bylaw Updates (Article 23)

Approved (Yes-222; No-1; Abstain-4)

This **Resolution** requests that the General Bylaws be updated within the Town’s online files in an expedited manner once approved by the Attorney General’s office. The intent is to allow citizens timely access to current laws.

Real Estate Transfer Tax (Article 24)

Approved (Yes-130; No-87; Abstain-13)

This **Home Rule Petition** proposes that a real estate transfer tax be imposed when certain types of real property transfers ownership. When a sale is processed, any proceeds greater than a set minimum threshold shall be taxed at a rate between 0.5% and a maximum of 2% of the sale price. A portion of the collected tax will be transferred to the Town Affordable Housing Trust, and the balance will be provided to the Town General Fund.

Support of Climate Change Superfund Bill (Article 25)

Approved (Yes-193; No-3; Abstain-15)

This **Resolution** states Town Meeting's support of state legislature bills, HD. 3369 and its twin SD. 1674 in establishing a climate change superfund to be financed by the most significant greenhouse gas emitters. This superfund will support climate change projects throughout the state. Such legislation will enable Massachusetts to prepare for the inevitable impacts of climate change resulting from legacy emissions.

Prevent Forced Payments of Broker's Fees (Article 26)

Approved (Yes-201; No-3; Abstain-6)

This **Resolution** supports amending state law to prevent tenants from being forced to pay brokers' fees during rental lease negotiations. Town Meeting would urge its elected delegation to support amending Section 87DDD1/2 of M.G.L. Chapter 112 to require that the party retaining the services of a real estate broker pay any associated fee or commission.

Preventing Nuclear War (Article 27)

Approved (Yes-161; No-17; Abstain-31)

This **Resolution** states that Town Meeting expresses its support for State Resolution S.D. 669, "*Resolution to Embrace the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and Move the US Back from the Brink of Nuclear War*". Brookline would be added to the list of 21 other cities and towns in Massachusetts that have already taken a similar action to protect their citizens from the existential threat of nuclear war.

Defending our Democracy (Article 28)

Approved (Yes-173; No-15; Abstain-26)

This **Resolution** affirms that the Town of Brookline is committed to democracy and the United States Constitution. This Article is a response to what some citizens have viewed as anti-democratic, illegal, and unconstitutional actions by the Trump administration.

Forms of Government for Brookline (Article 30)

Rejected (Yes-49; No-153; Abstain-9)

Town Meeting voted in the Fall of 2023 to empower the Meeting Moderator to establish a Committee on Forms of Government, which began its work in February 2024. The goal of the Committee was to study various municipal government options for Brookline and to produce a comprehensive report by May 2025. Several committee members produced "working papers," which provided perspectives on various forms of municipal government. However, no overall report was created. This **Resolution** sought to extend the work of the Committee to November 2025, including additional analysis of the pros and cons of our existing Town Meeting form of government.

Jesse Hefter - Town Meeting Member - Precinct 14
653 Chestnut Hill Ave
Brookline, MA 02445
Email: jesse.hefter@gmail.com
Web: jessehefter.com/townmeeting

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Eileen Berger via groups.io <eileenberger33=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: Andrew Fischer; Jonathan Golden; Brookline TMMA; Jonathan Klein
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30
Date: Friday, June 13, 2025 10:43:39 AM

A wise observation, Jonathan. Could such extreme changes have some similarity to the predicaments posed by the current changes in the federal government and most dramatically in higher education?
Eileen Berger p 15

> On Jun 8, 2025, at 7:42 PM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> The issues you raise would not necessarily be improved by a change from town to city. They might well be made worse. As I've observed before, systematic change is usually overrated as a solution for problems.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
>
> On Sunday, June 8, 2025 at 05:59:50 PM EDT, Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> Jonathan
>
> I see the difference between the suburban town with a population of ~50,000 that Brookline was from 1950 until 2020 and a much more urban municipality now at ~65,000 with increasing growth pressure that is making it increasingly unaffordable for the people that live and work here. We are not in control of the increasing growth and costs, both to residents and homeowners and to the municipality, Our town government is underfunded and unable to address the needs and demands of our citizenry.
>
> This warrants looking at the form of governance — objectively — and looking at how to address our current situation.
>
> Andrew Fischer
> Town Meeting Member
> Precinct 13
> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> 617-293-8304

On Jun 7, 2025, at 11:27 AM, Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Jonathan, if you don't see the difference between the Town of Brookline (in 1787 or today) and the United States (in 1787 or today), then I'm afraid I can't help you.

The process for deciding whether to review the town's governing document, and at the same time electing people to do it, is anti-democratic, for the reasons I have outlined. Those reasons are not directly related with whether it would be a good idea to have such a review. Again, if you cannot see that, I can't help you.

To my mind, the cure for the ills of democracy is usually more democracy, not less. Would a city be less democratic than our Town? Clearly, no. Are there issues in Brookline that would make it advantageous for us to become a city? Not to my mind.

The old rule is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." No one has made a credible case that Brookline is broke, at least not in a way that would find a likely solution in changing our form of government. End of story.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Saturday, June 7, 2025 at 10:44:33 AM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I appreciate and hear clearly the emphasis of Jon Margolis that he sees the charter process as antidemocratic. His arguments echo the statements of the antifederalists in the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, a document for which PAX has been standing at Coolidge Corner and rallying for in recent months.

The Articles of Confederation that preceded our Constitution were a crucial document of our national government and they helped us win the American Revolution. However, there came a point when the founders realized that the Articles of Confederation were no longer functional and could not sustain the needed growth of the United States. In this context, the idea of a

constitutional convention and the Constitution itself were born.

The ratification debates happened in each state and antifederalists opposed to the Constitution made the same specific arguments as Jon Margolis: the Constitution will yield too much power to a centralized government and will be taken over by monied interests. While the anti federalist arguments did not win the day, their ideas live on with every effort to reform government in our country. The arguments are a healthy part of our democracy.

As Mark Twain was credited with saying "History does not repeat itself but it does rhyme." Once again in American history, this time in Brookline, we are faced with a choice. Does our current form of government meet the needs of our community or do new approaches need to be explored through a charter commission process? It is a question that each of us on this list, as civic leaders, has the obligation to ask themselves. If you believe that, collectively, we are doing all that we can to deal with our structural deficit, morale and retention issues of our public employees, and other town priorities, it must mean that you have a good case for the status quo. I look forward to hearing that case.

On the other hand, if you believe that it is at least worth exploring other options to address townwide priorities, I hope that you will agree that the charter process will lead us to better answers by either affirming what we have or identifying new possibilities.

Thank you,

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Fri, Jun 6, 2025 at 7:39 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.
>
> Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.
>
> Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council

and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
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Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is “undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it’s a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 “wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst

1995 Charter Commission:

- In 1995, Amherst voters approved the formation of a Charter Commission to study potential changes to the town's government.
- The majority of the commission recommended transitioning to a seven-member council and a mayor, while maintaining a reduced-size representative Town Meeting of 150 members.
- This proposal was brought to voters twice and was defeated both times. en.wikipedia.org

2003 & 2005 Charter Proposals:

- Efforts to amend the charter to eliminate the Town Meeting and establish an elected mayor and a nine-member Town Council were rejected by voters twice: first in spring 2003 by 14 votes and again on March 29, 2005, by 252 votes. en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org+1

2016–2018 Charter Commission:

- In 2016, Amherst voters elected a new Charter Commission to revisit the town's governmental structure.
- After extensive public engagement, the commission proposed a council-manager form of government, eliminating the 240-member representative Town Meeting and the five-member Select Board.
- The proposed charter established a 13-member Town Council, with three members elected at-large and two from each of five districts, all serving two-year terms.
- The Town Manager would serve as the chief executive officer.
- On March 27, 2018, voters approved the new charter with a 58% majority. mma.org+1en.wikipedia.org+1mma.org

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Newton

2015 Charter Commission:

- In November 2015, Newton voters approved the creation of a Charter Commission to review and propose changes to the city's charter.
- The commission conducted a thorough review and, in 2017, proposed significant changes, including:
    - Reducing the City Council from 24 to 12 members.
    - Eliminating ward-only councilors in favor of all at-large councilors.
    - Implementing term limits for councilors.
- The proposed charter aimed to create a more streamlined and effective legislative body.
- However, on November 7, 2017, voters rejected the proposed

charter, opting to retain the existing structure.lwvnewton.orgnewtonma.govnewtonma.gov

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South Hadley

1998–2000 Charter Commission:

- In 1998, South Hadley voters elected a Charter Commission to explore changes to the town's government.
- The commission's recommendations were presented to voters in 2000 but were defeated by a vote of 2,249 against to 1,865 in favor. southhadley.org

2008–2009 Charter Commission:

- A second Charter Commission was elected in 2008 to revisit potential governmental reforms.
- The commission proposed a new charter, but in 2009, voters again rejected the changes, with 2,938 voting against and 1,895 in favor. southhadley.org+1mma.org+1

Framingham

2016–2017 Charter Commission

- Voters approved a Charter Commission in 2016 to consider changing from town to city government.
- The commission proposed replacing Town Meeting and Select Board with a mayor and 11-member City Council (9 district, 2 at-large).
- The charter passed narrowly in 2017 (5,684 to 5,579).

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.

The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.

The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball

from the beginning.

Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true.
> Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run.
> One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City". Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.
>
> If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly

conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,

I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.

As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.
>
> >>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues,

I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the

30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30.

As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the

MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.

Jonathan Golden, PhD

Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

<image001.jpg>

--
Mike Toffel, TMM8

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Potential Teamsters Strike
Date: Friday, June 13, 2025 1:17:34 PM
Attachments: image.png

Republic Waste employees, who are members of the Teamsters Union, just staged a practice picket in Boston in anticipation of a potential strike on or before July 1. Will Casella's sanitation employees, also members of the Teamsters Union, honor the strike should it take place?

As municipal employees, Brookline's sanitation employees are prohibited from striking.



Joslin Murphy, P16

--

Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

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REPUBLIC TEAMSTERS PRACTICE PICKET

BOSTON, MA



From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: joslinmurphy16@gmail.com
Cc: Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Potential Teamsters Strike
Date: Friday, June 13, 2025 1:25:26 PM
Attachments: image.png

It's always interesting to see the consequences of actions: When we give up municipal services to a private contractor, who can charge whateve they wish, because NOW they have residents at their mercy, then to see that actually the WORKERS of that private company has the COMPANY at their mercy.

Bet Casella didn't think of that. (thoughwe'll pay the higher rates for that). And the Town? "Not our problem any longer."

Well, we'll see at the ballot boxes.

Regina Frawley
!6

On Fri, Jun 13, 2025 at 1:17 PM Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Republic Waste employees, who are members of the Teamsters Union, just staged a practice picket in Boston in anticipation of a potential strike on or before July 1. Will Casella's sanitation employees, also members of the Teamsters Union, honor the strike should it take place?
>
> As municipal employees, Brookline's sanitation employees are prohibited from striking.



Joslin Murphy, P16

--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

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REPUBLIC TEAMSTERS PRACTICE PICKET

BOSTON, MA



From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io>
To: TMMA List Serve
Subject: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 8:10:59 AM

Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...





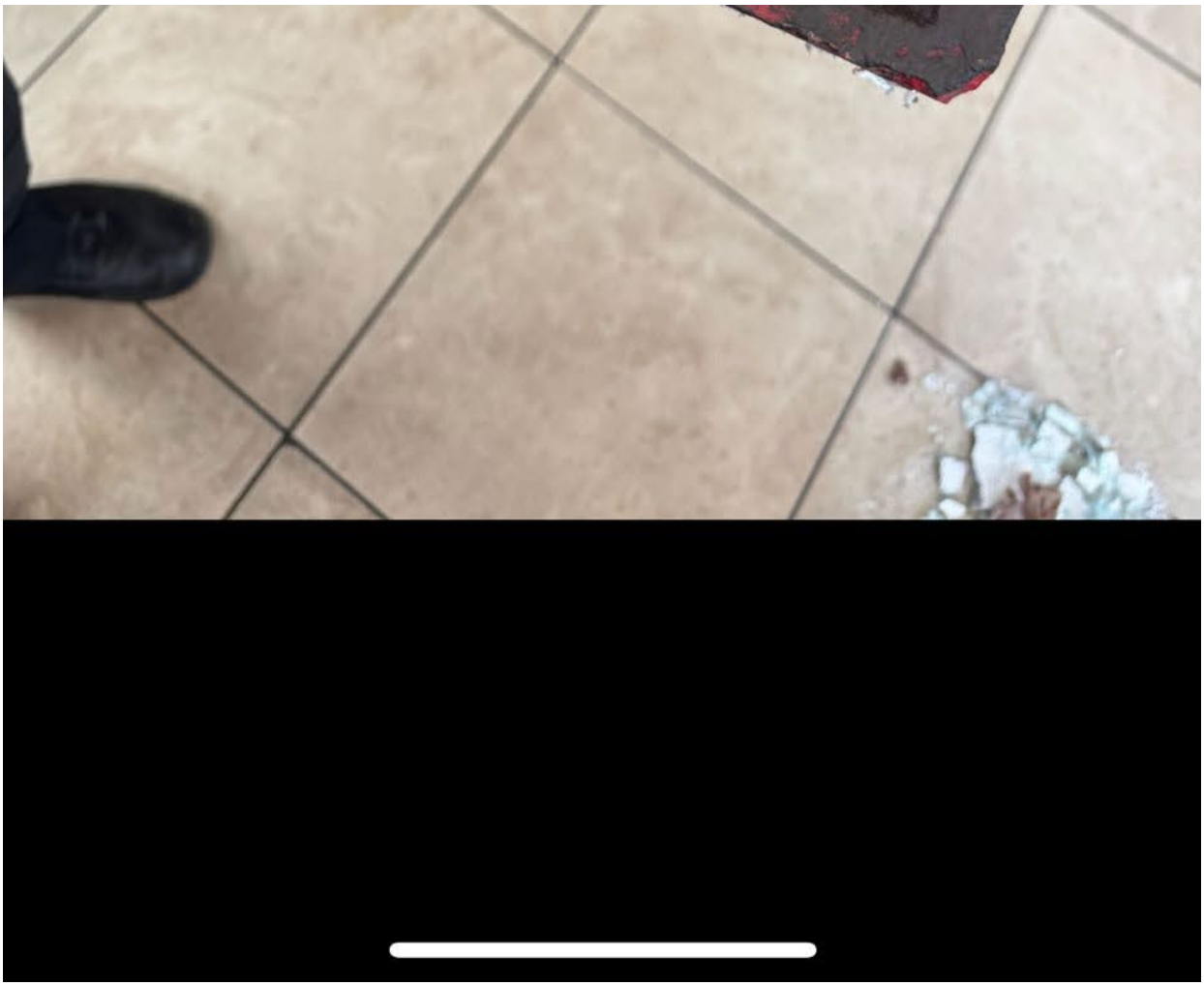
Groups.io Links:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jma@abbett.org
Cc: TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 8:47:38 AM
Attachments: image.png





Lisa Shatz

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:11 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...
>
> <b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.JPG>
>
> <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.JPG>

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Free Palestine

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Cc: jpaster@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 8:52:12 AM

This is incredibly disturbing. In my view, this is more than vandalism; it is violence. In our community, on our 'Main Street,' where we live and our children go to school.

As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I'm not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.

Carolyn Thall
Pct 16



On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...


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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bonnie Bastien via groups.io <bonniebastien=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jma@abbett.org
Cc: TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 8:55:01 AM

This is awful, Jonathan. I'm so sorry that this has happened.

Bonnie Bastien (she/her)

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 8:11 AM Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

> Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...


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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: cthall68@comcast.net
Cc: Brookline TM; jpaster@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 8:56:47 AM

Call this what it is. It is antisemitic violence. Vandalizing a Jewish grocery store for whatever reason or rationale because it is Jewish is antisemitism. In Brookline. We must all deplore it, universally.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:52 AM, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:
>
> This is incredibly disturbing. In my view, this is more than vandalism; it is violence. In our community, on our 'Main Street,' where we live and our children go to school.
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>
> Carolyn Thall
> Pct 16
>
> <10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>
>
> On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...
>
> <b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.jpeg>
>
> <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io>
To: jma@abbett.org; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 8:57:05 AM

Dear TMMs:

I also received this morning these shocking photos of vandalism perpetrated against The Butcherie. I have reached out to both Town Administrator Carey and Police Chief Paster for more details, including whether they know of any additional specific threats against members of our Jewish community and local businesses, and whether there are plans for increased vigilance on the part of the Town.

The Select Board has not yet had an opportunity to convene, however I want to emphatically condemn this act of vandalism against an iconic Brookline Jewish establishment that is such a central part of Jewish life for both Brookline residents and the people of Greater Boston. As one of the only kosher markets in Greater Boston, the Butcherie serves thousands of families every year. This act of vandalism conveys a clear message of intimidation and hatred to not just the patrons of this market, but to the Jewish community as a whole. I, for one, shall not be intimidated, and I expect that most if not all of you feel the same way. Let us stand together as leaders and residents of Brookline in rebuke of anti-Semitism in all its forms. Brookline must be a welcoming, safe community for all of its residents.

If you have any further leads on what happened at The Butcherie, or know or suspect of any additional possible threats to anyone at all during these politically charged times, please alert the Brookline Police: 617-730-2222 (non-emergency) and 617-730-2249 (Chief's Office).

Sincerely,
David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board

> On 6/15/2025 8:11:24 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...


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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Scott Gladstone via groups.io <scott=sgladstonelaw.com@groups.io>
To: cthall68@comcast.net; Brookline TM
Cc: jpaster@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:00:55 AM

Holding Jewish people (a Jewish owned market) responsible for the actions of the Israeli government is antisemitism. The resonance of Crystal Nacht is obvious. This phrase (on the brick) was uttered by the attacker against peaceful marchers in Boulder, Colorado and by the person who executed a young couple outside of the Jewish Museum in D.C. last month. Everyone should read today's NYT editorial board editorial.

https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/14/opinion/antisemitism-jewish-hate.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare

Scott Gladstone, precinct 16

Scott Gladstone
Associate Director
American Jewish Committee (AJC)
gladstones@ajc.org
617.457.8709 (Office)
AJC.org
Facebook.com/AJCGlobal
Twitter.com/AJCGlobal

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io>
Sent: Sunday, June 15, 2025 8:51:33 AM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: jpaster@brooklinema.gov <jpaster@brooklinema.gov>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight

This is incredibly disturbing. In my view, this is more than vandalism; it is violence. In our community, on our 'Main Street,' where we live and our children go to school.

As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I'm not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.

Carolyn Thall
Pct 16



On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...


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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io>
To: Charles Homer; Carolyn Thall
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io; Jen Paster
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:07:50 AM

I agree with you, Charlie. The symbolic nature of the target cannot be construed in any other way but as an anti-Semitic message of hate, intimidation, and violence. Scott has posted the highly disturbing parallels to Crystal Nacht.

David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board

> On 6/15/2025 8:56:55 AM, Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Call this what it is. It is antisemitic violence. Vandalizing a Jewish grocery store for whatever reason or rationale because it is Jewish is antisemitism. In Brookline. We must all deplore it, universally.
>
> Charlie Homer
> TMM Pct 8
>
> > On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:52 AM, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > This is incredibly disturbing. In my view, this is more than vandalism; it is violence. In our community, on our 'Main Street,' where we live and our children go to school.
> >
> > As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I'm not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.
> >
> > Carolyn Thall
> > Pct 16
> >
> > <10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>
> >
> > On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
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> >
> > <b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.jpeg>
> >
> > <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: dpearlman@brooklinema.gov
Cc: jma@abbett.org; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:11:12 AM

Thank you for following up in this manner, David. I hope the investigation to follow will result in the identification and prosecution of the perpetrator(s) to the fullest extent permitted by law. Joslin Murphy (P16)

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 8:57 AM David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
> I also received this morning these shocking photos of vandalism perpetrated against The Butcherie. I have reached out to both Town Administrator Carey and Police Chief Paster for more details, including whether they know of any additional specific threats against members of our Jewish community and local businesses, and whether there are plans for increased vigilance on the part of the Town.
>
> The Select Board has not yet had an opportunity to convene, however I want to emphatically condemn this act of vandalism against an iconic Brookline Jewish establishment that is such a central part of Jewish life for both Brookline residents and the people of Greater Boston. As one of the only kosher markets in Greater Boston, the Butcherie serves thousands of families every year. This act of vandalism conveys a clear message of intimidation and hatred to not just the patrons of this market, but to the Jewish community as a whole. I, for one, shall not be intimidated, and I expect that most if not all of you feel the same way. Let us stand together as leaders and residents of Brookline in rebuke of anti-Semitism in all its forms. Brookline must be a welcoming, safe community for all of its residents.
>
> If you have any further leads on what happened at The Butcherie, or know or suspect of any additional possible threats to anyone at all during these politically charged times, please alert the Brookline Police: 617-730-2222 (non-emergency) and 617-730-2249 (Chief's Office).
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> Sincerely,
> David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board
>
> > On 6/15/2025 8:11:24 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...


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--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Susan Park via groups.io <susanforbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: joslinmurphy16@gmail.com
Cc: dpearlman@brooklinema.gov; jma@abbett.org; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:36:43 AM

Agreed. Unacceptable; intimidation in this way is not ok. My heart goes out to the owners of this wonderful store and to the Jewish community. As the PA Governor Shapiro said, these acts will not intimidate the Jewish people and their faith.

Condemning this horrible act with you David and Joslin and others who gave written in.

Susan Park
TMM17

On Sun, 15 Jun 2025 at 9:11 AM Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Thank you for following up in this manner, David. I hope the investigation to follow will result in the identification and prosecution of the perpetrator(s) to the fullest extent permitted by law. Joslin Murphy (P16)
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 8:57 AM David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Dear TMMs:
> >
> > I also received this morning these shocking photos of vandalism perpetrated against The Butcherie. I have reached out to both Town Administrator Carey and Police Chief Paster for more details, including whether they know of any additional specific threats against members of our Jewish community and local businesses, and whether there are plans for increased vigilance on the part of the Town.
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> >
> > If you have any further leads on what happened at The Butcherie, or know or suspect of any additional possible threats to anyone at all during these politically charged times, please alert the Brookline Police: 617-730-2222 (non-emergency) and 617-730-2249 (Chief's Office).
> >
> > Sincerely,
> > David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board
> >
> > > On 6/15/2025 8:11:24 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...


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--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Paul Warren via groups.io <paulwarren65=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:43:06 AM

What happened at the Butcherie was an act of antisemitic violence meant to intimidate and harm. I join many others in condemning this attack and standing firmly in support of our Jewish community.

I join my colleague, David Pearlman, in calling for a swift, comprehensive response and investigation to bring the perpetrator(s) to justice.

We will not be intimidated by such cowardly acts.

Paul Warren, Select Board

-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-
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Mute This Topic: https://groups.io/mt/113654981/4850368
Group Owner: brooklinetmma+owner@groups.io
Unsubscribe: https://groups.io/g/brooklinetmma/unsub [redacted]
-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: dpearlman@brooklinema.gov
Cc: Charles Homer; Carolyn Thall; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Jen Paster
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:46:25 AM

Adding my voice to the condemnation of this act.
This is horrifying.
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 9:07 AM, David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I agree with you, Charlie. The symbolic nature of the target cannot be construed in any other way but as an anti-Semitic message of hate, intimidation, and violence. Scott has posted the highly disturbing parallels to Crystal Nacht.
>
> David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board
>
> > On 6/15/2025 8:56:55 AM, Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Call this what it is. It is antisemitic violence. Vandalizing a Jewish grocery store for whatever reason or rationale because it is Jewish is antisemitism. In Brookline. We must all deplore it, universally.
> >
> > Charlie Homer
> > TMM Pct 8
> >
> > > On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:52 AM, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:
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> > >
> > > Carolyn Thall
> > > Pct 16
> > >
> > > <10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io
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>
> <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: dpearlman@brooklinema.gov; Charles Homer; Carolyn Thall; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Jen Paster
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:56:28 AM

I also want to give the strongest possible condemnation to the vile people who would do such a thing.

The State of Israel is not a stand-in for Jewish people. Conflating the two is not only ignorant, it is antisemitic at the highest level. Jewish communities should never be targeted for the actions of a government.

Its gross. And it won't be tolerated here. I hope the police are able to find who did this and punish them accordingly.

Thank you to the members of the select board who have swiftly taken action on this act of violence and issued statements.

Solidarity,
Anthony Buono
TMM P9

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:46 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Adding my voice to the condemnation of this act.
> This is horrifying.
> Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14
>
> > On Jun 15, 2025, at 9:07 AM, David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I agree with you, Charlie. The symbolic nature of the target cannot be construed in any other way but as an anti-Semitic message of hate, intimidation, and violence. Scott has posted the highly disturbing parallels to Crystal Nacht.
> >
> > David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board
> >
> > > On 6/15/2025 8:56:55 AM, Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Call this what it is. It is antisemitic violence. Vandalizing a Jewish grocery store for whatever reason or rationale because it is Jewish is antisemitism. In Brookline. We must all deplore it, universally.
> > >
> > > Charlie Homer
> > > TMM Pct 8

On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:52 AM, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:

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As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I'm not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.

Carolyn Thall
Pct 16

<10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>

On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...

<b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.jpeg>

<746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Patty Correa via groups.io <pattycorr=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	anthonybuono728@gmail.com
Cc:	leroseman@gmail.com; dpearlman@brooklinema.gov; Charles Homer; Carolyn Thall; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Jen Paster
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date:	Sunday, June 15, 2025 10:23:23 AM

I recommend this be reported to the Attorney General's Office's Civil Rights Division for investigation as a hate crime (as well as to the police etc.). If the offender(s) can be identified, AG can pursue a Mass. Civil Rights Act injunction that can be in effect for a period of years, violation of which may be criminally punishable in and of itself. (I was in that division for 11 years working on these types of cases, among others.)

This is really horrible.

Patty Correa, TMM P-6

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:56 AM Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I also want to give the strongest possible condemnation to the vile people who would do such a thing.
>
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> > > <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>
>
> --
> Charlie Homer
> TMM Pct 8
> Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Cathleen Cavell via groups.io <cathleencavell=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: pattycorr@gmail.com
Cc: anthonybuono728@gmail.com; leroseman@gmail.com; dpearlman@brooklinema.gov; Charles Homer; Carolyn Thall; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Jen Paster
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 10:44:08 AM

Thank you, Patty, for adding the possibility of a Civil Rights injunction and AGO investigation. Think about the harm that could be done to everyone and everything American all over the world if all of us were conflated with our current federal government.

I believe this is a response to yesterday's show of resistance to Trump as well as anti-Semitism. Let's acknowledge that Semitic includes those who speak Arabic as well as Hebrew (all descended from Noah's son Shem). Hence, anti-semitism applies to hate crimes against both of us.
Cathleen Cavell, TMM P-1

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David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board

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Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

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<10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>

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Charlie Homer
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Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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--
Cathleen Cavell
cathleencavell@gmail.com
617-733-1492 mobile

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jma@abbett.org
Cc: TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 10:46:24 AM

Dear good people of Brookline,
My in-laws experienced Kristallnacht in Germany -- November 9,1938. They watched their synagogue burn; they listened to the breaking glass in Jewish businesses; their father was taken away to Auschwitz. While the brick that broke the glass at the Butcherie is not an act of our government, it does represent a widespread culture of hate and political violence in our country. The millions of peaceful pro-constitution patriots who marched throughout our country yesterday give me hope. We are the majority.
Bob Weintraub

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 8:11 AM Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

> Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...
>
> 
>



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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sassan Zelkha via groups.io <sassanbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bobw9090@gmail.com
Cc: jma@abbett.org; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 11:03:51 AM
Attachments: B76FAAAF-E102-4469-B823-7CF277BFCDA9.png

I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has spoken out clearly and unequivocally against this hateful and antisemitic act. In moments like these, silence or moral equivocation only serves to embolden those who traffic in hate.

There is absolutely no place in our community for antisemitism, hate, or violence—no matter the source or justification. Brookline must remain a place where all residents feel safe, respected, and protected. We cannot allow hatred to take root here.

The most disturbing comment I've seen on Facebook so far came from a Brookline resident who is not only well known in the community but also highly active in the Brookline Peace Coalition. Shockingly, instead of condemning the antisemitic act, they attempted to justify it—something that is both deeply troubling and completely unacceptable. Btw the brike broke butchery sign not the map of Israel as claimed by this individual.



Arnaud Amzallag Top contributor

A few observations:

- The brick was aimed at a map of Israel.

- The map of Israel that was “from the river to the sea”: Gaza and the West Bank are not on the map - Palestine is erased from that map.

- The brick had “Free Palestine” written on it.

It seems there is an obvious political message targeting the display of the map, no? Why the haste to characterize it as an antisemitic incident?

27m **Like** **Reply**



Sassan Zelkha
Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
Pronouns: He/Him/His

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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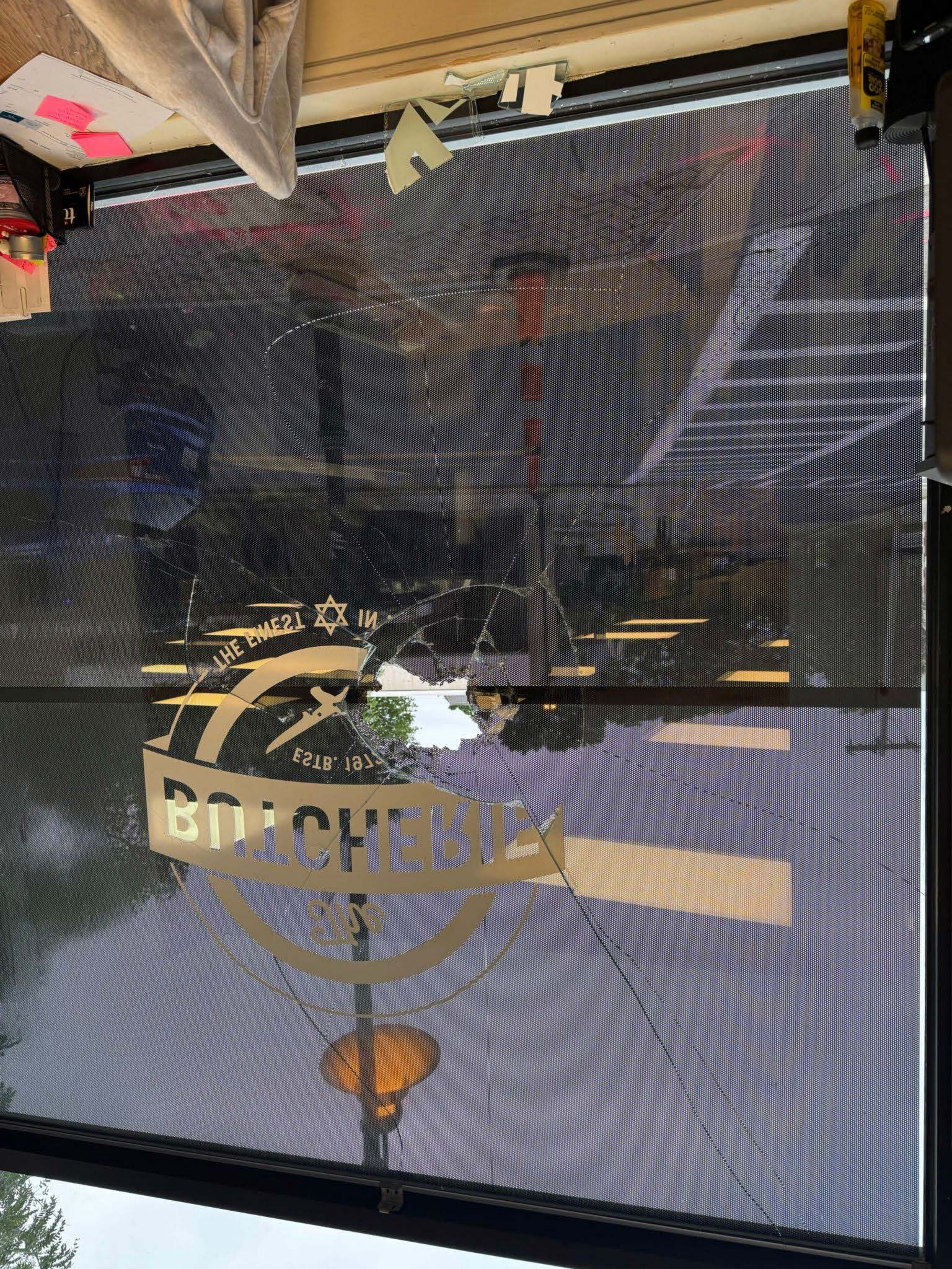

EXIT



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THE FINEST IN
ESTB. 1974
BOLCHEBIE

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Fran Perler via groups.io <Fran.Pct8=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: dpearlman@brooklinema.gov
Cc: JMA@abbett.org; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 11:15:43 AM

I was saddened to wake up to this news. I urge Brookliners not to be intimidated by this egregious act. We need to stand against all hate and support all members of our community. We need a strong response from all the authorities everyone else has mentioned. Antisemitism is not new, but individuals acting so violently is increasing here and around the country. The Jewish community is strong and will not be bullied. I support the Butcherie.

Take care,
Fran Perler
Precinct 8 TMM
Advisory Committee

Council on Aging, Citizen Member
Friends of Hall Pond, Board Member
……
Sent from Fran's iPad. Language errors courtesy of autocorrect.

On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:57 AM, David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

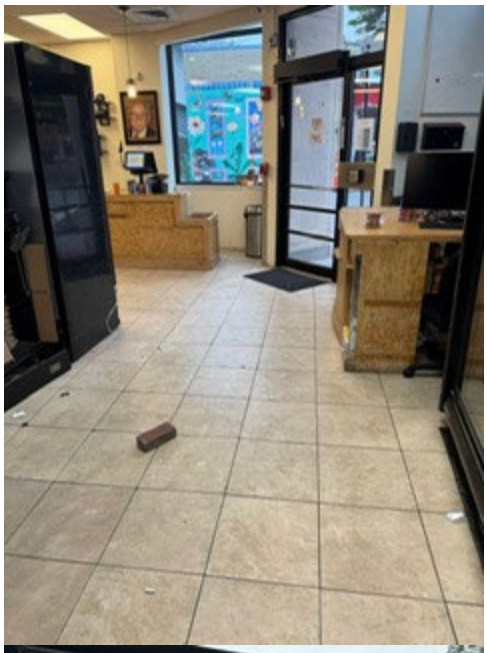
I also received this morning these shocking photos of vandalism perpetrated against The Butcherie. I have reached out to both Town Administrator Carey and Police Chief Paster for more details, including whether they know of any additional specific threats against members of our Jewish community and local businesses, and whether there are plans for increased vigilance on the part of the Town.

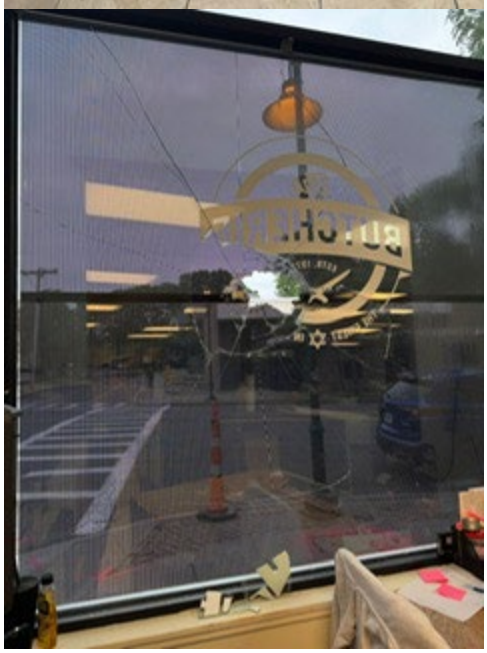
The Select Board has not yet had an opportunity to convene, however I want to emphatically condemn this act of vandalism against an iconic Brookline Jewish establishment that is such a central part of Jewish life for both Brookline residents and the people of Greater Boston. As one of the only kosher markets in Greater Boston, the Butcherie serves thousands of families every year. This act of vandalism conveys a clear message of intimidation and hatred to not just the patrons of this market, but to the Jewish community as a whole. I, for one, shall not be intimidated, and I expect that most if not all of you feel the same way. Let us stand together as leaders and residents of Brookline in rebuke of anti-Semitism in all its forms. Brookline must be a welcoming, safe community for all of its residents.

If you have any further leads on what happened at The Butcherie, or know or suspect of any additional possible threats to anyone at all during these politically charged times, please alert the Brookline Police: 617-730-2222 (non-emergency) and 617-730-2249 (Chief's Office).

Sincerely,
David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board

> On 6/15/2025 8:11:24 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...





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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Fran.Pct8@gmail.com
Cc: dpearlman@brooklinema.gov; JMA@abbett.org; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 11:29:10 AM

I am both deeply saddened and horrified by the antisemitic violence targeted at the Butcherie.

My heart is heavy for my Jewish friends, colleagues, and neighbors who this act of hate has impacted.

To boost what was said by Select Board Vice Chair David Pearlman:
"If you have any further leads on what happened at The Butcherie, or know or suspect of any additional possible threats to anyone at all during these politically charged times, please alert the Brookline Police: 617-730-2222 (non-emergency) and 617-730-2249 (Chief's Office)."

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

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<Fran.Pct8=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

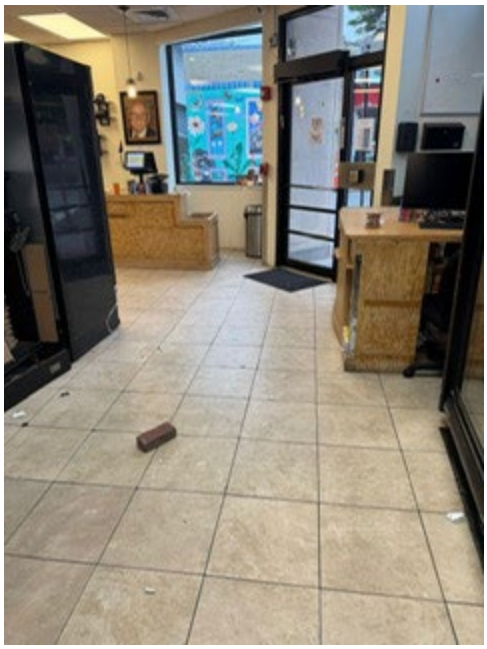
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> Fran Perler
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>
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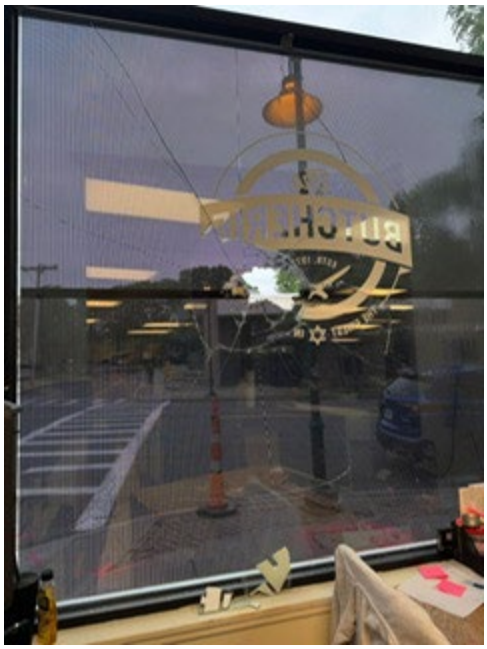
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Sincerely,
David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Scott Gladstone via groups.io <scott=sgladstonelaw.com@groups.io>
To: paulwarren65@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 12:14:06 PM

I just spoke to the owner. The best thing to do is to come to the Butcherie today and buy buy buy. If you don't need the food, give it to the food pantry.

Scott Gladstone
Associate Director
American Jewish Committee (AJC)
gladstones@ajc.org
617.457.8709 (Office)
AJC.org
Facebook.com/AJCGlobal
Twitter.com/AJCGlobal

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Paul Warren via groups.io <paulwarren65=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:42:52 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Butcherie vandalized overnight

What happened at the Butcherie was an act of antisemitic violence meant to intimidate and harm. I join many others in condemning this attack and standing firmly in support of our Jewish community.

I join my colleague, David Pearlman, in calling for a swift, comprehensive response and investigation to bring the perpetrator(s) to justice.

We will not be intimidated by such cowardly acts.

Paul Warren, Select Board

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Alec Lebovitz via groups.io <alec.lebovitz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: kevin4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: Fran.Pct8@gmail.com; dpearlman@brooklinema.gov; JMA@abbett.org; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 12:21:06 PM

Thank you to everyone on this thread for your unequivocal condemnation of this heinous act of hatred, and in particular to Select Board members David Pearlman and Paul Warren for their strong statements.

In the midst of a day that brought Brookliners of all walks of life together in solidarity with our shared American values of pluralism and respect for the rule of law, this is a sad reminder that our community is not immune to the continued deterioration of our national politics. It is heartening that we can all stand together as neighbors and denounce this anti-Semitic act aimed at intimidating and otherizing the Jewish community. We can never allow this kind of behavior to be tolerated or normalized.

Best,

Alec Lebovitz
Advisory Committee
TMM, P8

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 11:29 AM Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I am both deeply saddened and horrified by the antisemitic violence targeted at the Butcherie.
>
> My heart is heavy for my Jewish friends, colleagues, and neighbors who this act of hate has impacted.
>
> To boost what was said by Select Board Vice Chair David Pearlman:
> "If you have any further leads on what happened at The Butcherie, or know or suspect of any additional possible threats to anyone at all during these politically charged times, please alert the Brookline Police: 617-730-2222 (non-emergency) and 617-730-2249 (Chief's Office)."
>
> Kevin MacKenzie
> Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
> Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 11:15 AM Fran Perler via groups.io <Fran.Pct8=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > I was saddened to wake up to this news. I urge Brookliners not to be intimidated by this egregious act. We need to stand against all hate and support all members of our community. We need a strong response from all the authorities everyone else has mentioned. Antisemitism is not new, but individuals acting so violently is increasing here and around the country. The Jewish community is strong and will not be bullied. I support the Butcherie.

Take care,
Fran Perler
Precinct 8 TMM
Advisory Committee

Council on Aging, Citizen Member
Friends of Hall Pond, Board Member
……
Sent from Fran's iPad. Language errors courtesy of autocorrect.

On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:57 AM, David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

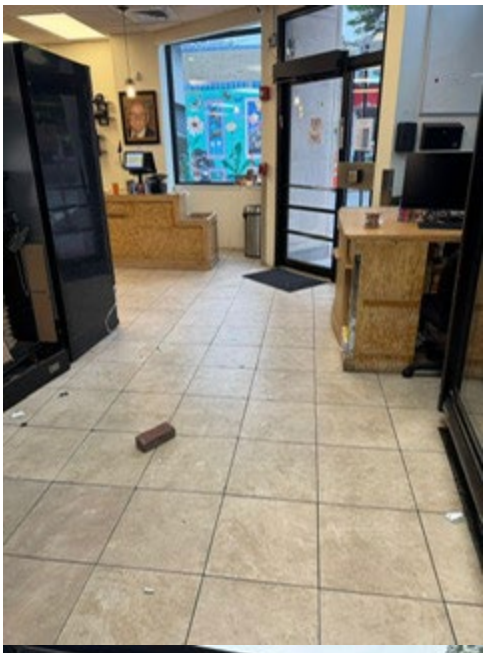
I also received this morning these shocking photos of vandalism perpetrated against The Butcherie. I have reached out to both Town Administrator Carey and Police Chief Paster for more details, including whether they know of any additional specific threats against members of our Jewish community and local businesses, and whether there are plans for increased vigilance on the part of the Town.

The Select Board has not yet had an opportunity to convene, however I want to emphatically condemn this act of vandalism against an iconic Brookline Jewish establishment that is such a central part of Jewish life for both Brookline residents and the people of Greater Boston. As one of the only kosher markets in Greater Boston, the Butcherie serves thousands of families every year. This act of vandalism conveys a clear message of intimidation and hatred to not just the patrons of this market, but to the Jewish community as a whole. I, for one, shall not be intimidated, and I expect that most if not all of you feel the same way. Let us stand together as leaders and residents of Brookline in rebuke of anti-Semitism in all its forms. Brookline must be a welcoming, safe community for all of its residents.

If you have any further leads on what happened at The Butcherie, or know or suspect of any additional possible threats to anyone at all during these politically charged times, please alert the Brookline Police: 617-730-2222 (non-emergency) and 617-730-2249 (Chief's Office).

Sincerely,
David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board

> On 6/15/2025 8:11:24 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...





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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Chi Chi Wu via groups.io <ChiChiWuTMM=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: kevin4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 12:35:43 PM

This is terrible, I am so sorry this has happened. Violence is never acceptable, and a truly senseless thing that only hurts a cause

Chi Chi Wu
TMM P7

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 11:29 AM Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I am both deeply saddened and horrified by the antisemitic violence targeted at the Butcherie.
>
> My heart is heavy for my Jewish friends, colleagues, and neighbors who this act of hate has impacted.
>
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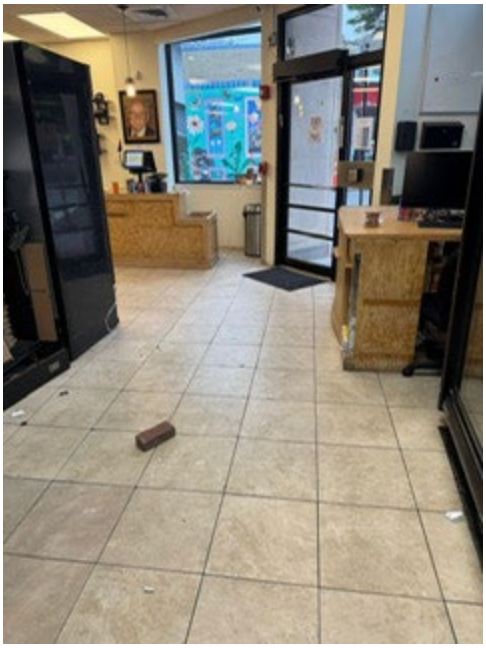
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: cathleencavell@gmail.com
Cc: pattycorr@gmail.com; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; leroseman@gmail.com; dpearlman@brooklinema.gov; Charles Homer; Carolyn Thall; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Jen Paster
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 12:57:17 PM

Thank you, Cathleen, for adding your second paragraph

Andrew M. Fischer
TMM p13

Sent from my ipad

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 10:44 AM, Cathleen Cavell via groups.io <cathleencavell=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Thank you, Patty, for adding the possibility of a Civil Rights injunction and AGO investigation. Think about the harm that could be done to everyone and everything American all over the world if all of us were conflated with our current federal government.
>
> I believe this is a response to yesterday's show of resistance to Trump as well as anti-Semitism. Let's acknowledge that Semitic includes those who speak Arabic as well as Hebrew (all descended from Noah's son Shem). Hence, anti-semitism applies to hate crimes against both of us. Cathleen Cavell, TMM P-1
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:23 AM Patty Correa via groups.io <pattycorr=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > I recommend this be reported to the Attorney General's Office's Civil Rights Division for investigation as a hate crime (as well as to the police etc.). If the offender(s) can be identified, AG can pursue a Mass. Civil Rights Act injunction that can be in effect for a period of years, violation of which may be criminally punishable in and of itself. (I was in that division for 11 years working on these types of cases, among others.)
> >
> > This is really horrible.
> >
> > Patty Correa, TMM P-6
> >
> > On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:56 AM Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > > I also want to give the strongest possible condemnation to the vile people who would do such a thing.
> > >
> > > The State of Israel is not a stand-in for Jewish people. Conflating the two is not only ignorant, it is antisemitic at the highest level. Jewish communities should never be targeted for the actions of a government.
> > >
> > > Its gross. And it won't be tolerated here. I hope the police are able to find who did this and punish them accordingly.

Thank you to the members of the select board who have swiftly taken action on this act of violence and issued statements.

Solidarity,
Anthony Buono
TMM P9

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:46 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Adding my voice to the condemnation of this act.
> This is horrifying.
> Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14
>
> > On Jun 15, 2025, at 9:07 AM, David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I agree with you, Charlie. The symbolic nature of the target cannot be construed in any other way but as an anti-Semitic message of hate, intimidation, and violence. Scott has posted the highly disturbing parallels to Crystal Nacht.
> >
> > David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board
> >
> > > On 6/15/2025 8:56:55 AM, Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Call this what it is. It is antisemitic violence. Vandalizing a Jewish grocery store for whatever reason or rationale because it is Jewish is antisemitism. In Brookline. We must all deplore it, universally.
> > >
> > > Charlie Homer
> > > TMM Pct 8
> > >
> > > > On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:52 AM, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:
> > > >
> > > > This is incredibly disturbing. In my view, this is more than vandalism; it is violence. In our community, on our 'Main Street,' where we live and our children go to school.
> > > >
> > > > As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I'm not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.
> > > >
> > > > Carolyn Thall
> > > > Pct 16
> > > >
> > > > <10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>

On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...

<b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.jpeg>

<746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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--
Cathleen Cavell
cathleencavell@gmail.com
617-733-1492 mobile

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Liz Linder via groups.io <liz=lizlinder.com@groups.io>
To:	Patty Correa
Cc:	anthonybuono728@gmail.com; Lynda Roseman; dpearlman@brooklinema.gov; Charlie Homer; Carolyn Thall; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Jen Paster
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date:	Sunday, June 15, 2025 1:18:11 PM

Deeply disturbing.

My father's family experienced antisemitic persecution in WWII (and surviving members of his immediate family ultimately made their way here).

As a child I always wondered how it could be that swaths of citizens would turn on their own.

I'm grateful to see support from our leadership against antisemitism and antisemitic violence, with the potential to investigate this a hate crime.

Posting actions of note again in the thread:

- support the Butcherie
- *if you have further leads on what happened at The Butcherie, or know or suspect of any additional possible threats to anyone at all during these politically charged times, please alert the Brookline Police: 617-730-2222 (non-emergency) and 617-730-2249 (Chief's* Office).
- read this timely piece from the NYT Editorial Board: https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/14/opinion/antisemitism-jewish-hate.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare

Peace,

LL

-

Liz Linder
Photography, Inc.
cell/ 617-818-6537
studio/ 617-232-3202
http://www.lizlinder.com
http://www.lizlinder.com/blog

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our community, on our ‘Main Street,’ where we live and our children go to school.

As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I’m not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.

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Pct 16

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--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Day via groups.io <dspencerday=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: sassanbrookline@gmail.com
Cc: TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 1:33:44 PM

I am moved by all of the comments being made on this list. I, too, am disgusted by this hateful and violent act by the perpetrators. As Sassan Zelkha notes, in moments like these, silence and moral equivocation can be misinterpreted as acceptance or even support, so it is good that we share our community's outrage at this attack on our neighbors … well, on all of us.

The New York Times editorial cited by Scott Gladstone is particularly insightful on how the complexities of global politics can be a pretext to (re-)introduce anti-semitism and other forms of hate of one group towards another. In this light the Facebook post cited by Mr. Zelkha is particularly disturbing. I wonder if the Facebook post's author would wish to have disagreement with his views, whatever they are, be expressed on a brick hurled through his living room window? The very act betrays the dehumanizing motivations of the criminals.

David Day
Pct 16

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 11:01 AM, Sassan Zelkha via groups.io <sassanbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has spoken out clearly and unequivocally against this hateful and antisemitic act. In moments like these, silence or moral equivocation only serves to embolden those who traffic in hate.
>
> There is absolutely no place in our community for antisemitism, hate, or violence —no matter the source or justification. Brookline must remain a place where all residents feel safe, respected, and protected. We cannot allow hatred to take root here.
>
> The most disturbing comment I've seen on Facebook so far came from a Brookline resident who is not only well known in the community but also highly active in the Brookline Peace Coalition. Shockingly, instead of condemning the antisemitic act, they attempted to justify it—something that is both deeply troubling and completely unacceptable. Btw the brike broke butchery sign not the map of Israel as claimed by this individual.
> <IMG_9741.jpeg>
>
> <B76FAAAF-E102-4469-B823-7CF277BFCDA9.png>
>
> Sassan Zelkha
> Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
> Pronouns: He/Him/His

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear good people of Brookline,
> My in-laws experienced Kristallnacht in Germany -- November 9,1938. They watched their synagogue burn; they listened to the breaking glass in Jewish businesses; their father was taken away to Auschwitz. While the brick that broke the glass at the Butcherie is not an act of our government, it does represent a widespread culture of hate and political violence in our country. The millions of peaceful pro-constitution patriots who marched throughout our country yesterday give me hope. We are the majority.
> Bob Weintraub
>
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bernard Greene via groups.io <bgreene=brooklinema.gov@groups.io>
To: TMMA listserv
Cc: Charles Carey; Jen Paster; Christina Metcalf
Subject: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 4:03:52 PM

I join with other Select Board members and Town leaders in deploring the attack this morning on The Butcherie, an important and beloved kosher supermarket in Brookline that serves the entire greater Boston region. All of Brookline should be united in condemning the attack on this venerable Jewish business.

The following is a statement issued by Town Administrator Chas Carey:

> *"This attack on a Jewish establishment that serves all members of our community with care and kindness is antisemitic, plain and simple. Terrorizing a kosher butcher's shop by throwing a brick through its window with a message that suggests it is somehow responsible for the geopolitical situation in the Middle East is appalling and antithetical to everything Brookline stands for. We unequivocally condemn this hateful act of violence against our Jewish community members and will bring its perpetrators to justice.*
>
> *"The Police Department, in coordination with state and federal law enforcement, are providing enhanced support for Jewish community groups here in Brookline. We stand with our Jewish community members and will not waver in our commitment to protect them. If you have any information about this crime, please contact the Detectives Division at 617-730-2711."*

It is easy to condemn, but the hard part is understanding where this hatred that has become normalized in America and is plaguing the country comes from so that we can be prepared to defend against it and stop it when it appears in whatever disguise it uses. I don't have the answer, but I do believe that the path to undermining and to eliminating this problem starts with a clear understanding of some key facts. For example, on a per capita basis, Jews face far greater risks of being victims of hate crimes than members of any other demographic groups and the threats have been surging. According to the FBI anti-Jewish incidents were 291 incidents per 1 million people in 2023 (the latest available numbers). The next highest was 111 anti-L.G.B.T.Q. incidents per 1 million people. That should frighten all of us and cause us to pay special attention to the specific battle against antisemitism, whether isolated incidents or a pattern of attacks.

But we must also avoid being induced to undermine the ultimate protections that we have against hatred and the discord that is hatred's breeding ground, whether that discord is from private or, alarmingly, governmental actors. While attacking antisemitism we have to also defend against attacks on free speech and other constitutional rights, attacks on other discrete groups of people, and attacks on the institutions that protect and strengthen democracy, such as colleges and universities, the press, and the courts.

So, let's start with condemning hatred when it rears its ugly head in Brookline and supporting the victims of that hatred. But let's not forget the bigger and longer-term problems that we are facing and that are perpetuating this hatred.

Bernard W. Greene
Chair, Brookline Select Board
857-225-0402
bgreene@brooklinema.gov

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Ariel Soiffer via groups.io <asoiffer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bgreene@brooklinema.gov
Cc: listserv TMMA; Charles Carey; Jen Paster; Christina Metcalf
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 4:09:53 PM

It is high time for our town and state to vigorously enforce our anti-masking law.

Sassan highlighted a comment from a leader of the Brookline "Peace" Coalition. That that individual continues to be a leader of that group says all that we need to know about that group.

Ariel Soiffer, TMM2

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 2:03 PM, Bernard Greene via groups.io <bgreene=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I join with other Select Board members and Town leaders in deploring the attack this morning on The Butcherie, an important and beloved kosher supermarket in Brookline that serves the entire greater Boston region. All of Brookline should be united in condemning the attack on this venerable Jewish business.
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bgreene@brooklinema.gov

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Michael Rubenstein via groups.io <mrubenstein=brooklinema.gov@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 4:33:00 PM

Like Chair Greene, Vice-Chair Pearlman, and fellow Select Board Member Warren I am both saddened and outraged by this antisemitic, violent assault on a member of our community. I also am grateful to Rep. Vitolo and others who have spoken out to clearly call this act of hatred what it is and to call for us to join together against the rising level of antisemitism in our community and our nation.

Members of our community gathered outside the Butcherie this afternoon to support its owners and employees. Through words, song and dance, their strength of spirit shines brightly against the darkness of hate hurled toward us.

Michael Rubenstein
Brookline Select Board Member

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Circles of Connection
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 6:06:14 PM

Colleagues,

I am most grateful for the support offered by leaders in the Brookline community in response to the attack on the Butcherie.

In case you or your neighbors are looking for ways to process these difficult moments, I wanted to share this resource with you:

https://www.jfcsboston.org/our-services/mental-health-emotional-wellbeing/support-for-adults/peer-led-support-circles?fbclid=IwY2xjawK8IolleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETFKZUZCaGRHYldTRGpLdmRlAR6yAwD3_fc83jqnBi6l4gTtdV_aIN7_uqc-64iEjNCs1KG0U4k4Gi-tVbW6Zg_aem_hxjx-0RIUC-5T17xGvillg#:~:text=Circles%20of%20Connection%20is%20a,%2C%20polarization%2C%20and%20rising%20antisemitism

I am one of many facilitators in the Circles of Connection program. Please be in touch with questions.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: sassanbrookline@gmail.com; dspencerday@gmail.com
Cc: TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 7:52:10 PM

I share your anger at this politically motivated hate crime. But I don't like your sentence below. Writing how would you like a brick thrown through your window suggests retaliation and can be read as a threat.
John Bassett
p6

> I wonder if the Facebook post's author would wish to have disagreement with his views, whatever they are, be expressed on a brick hurled through his living room window?

On Sunday, June 15, 2025 at 01:33:43 PM EDT, David Day via groups.io <dspencerday=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I am moved by all of the comments being made on this list. I, too, am disgusted by this hateful and violent act by the perpetrators. As Sassan Zelkha notes, in moments like these, silence and moral equivocation can be misinterpreted as acceptance or even support, so it is good that we share our community's outrage at this attack on our neighbors … well, on all of us.

The New York Times editorial cited by Scott Gladstone is particularly insightful on how the complexities of global politics can be a pretext to (re-)introduce anti-semitism and other forms of hate of one group towards another. In this light the Facebook post cited by Mr. Zelkha is particularly disturbing. I wonder if the Facebook post's author would wish to have disagreement with his views, whatever they are, be expressed on a brick hurled through his living room window? The very act betrays the dehumanizing motivations of the criminals.

David Day
Pct 16

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 11:01 AM, Sassan Zelkha via groups.io <sassanbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has spoken out clearly and unequivocally against this hateful and antisemitic act. In moments like these, silence or moral equivocation only serves to embolden those who traffic in hate.
>
> There is absolutely no place in our community for antisemitism, hate, or violence—no matter the source or justification. Brookline must remain a place where all residents feel safe, respected, and protected. We cannot allow hatred to take root here.
>
> The most disturbing comment I've seen on Facebook so far came from a Brookline resident who is not only well known in the community but

also highly active in the Brookline Peace Coalition. Shockingly, instead of condemning the antisemitic act, they attempted to justify it—something that is both deeply troubling and completely unacceptable. Btw the brike broke butchery sign not the map of Israel as claimed by this individual.
<IMG_9741.jpeg>

<B76FAAAF-E102-4469-B823-7CF277BFCDA9.png>

Sassan Zelkha
Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
Pronouns: He/Him/His

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear good people of Brookline,
> My in-laws experienced Kristallnacht in Germany -- November 9,1938. They watched their synagogue burn; they listened to the breaking glass in Jewish businesses; their father was taken away to Auschwitz. While the brick that broke the glass at the Butcherie is not an act of our government, it does represent a widespread culture of hate and political violence in our country. The millions of peaceful pro-constitution patriots who marched throughout our country yesterday give me hope. We are the majority.
> Bob Weintraub
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 8:11 AM Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...
> >
> > <b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.JPG>
> > <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.JPG>

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Faiza Khan via groups.io <faiza_khan=hotmail.com@groups.io>
To: listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 8:51:58 PM

Fellow TMMs,

I am both very saddened and disturbed to hear of the vandalism today at The Butcherie that was aimed at the Brookline Jewish community, and deeply empathize with the hurt this caused them. When a violent act seems to target a part of community, it in fact impacts all of us, as members of a shared community. We are one in Brookline and I am hoping for better days while praying for peace in our diversely wonderful town.

Faiza Khan
Precinct 13

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 4:03 PM, Bernard Greene via groups.io <bgreene=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I join with other Select Board members and Town leaders in deploring the attack this morning on The Butcherie, an important and beloved kosher supermarket in Brookline that serves the entire greater Boston region. All of Brookline should be united in condemning the attack on this venerable Jewish business.
>
> The following is a statement issued by Town Administrator Chas Carey:
>
> > *"This attack on a Jewish establishment that serves all members of our community with care and kindness is antisemitic, plain and simple. Terrorizing a kosher butcher's shop by throwing a brick through its window with a message that suggests it is somehow responsible for the geopolitical situation in the Middle East is appalling and antithetical to everything Brookline stands for. We unequivocally condemn this hateful act of violence against our Jewish community members and will bring its perpetrators to justice.*
> >
> > *"The Police Department, in coordination with state and federal law enforcement, are providing enhanced support for Jewish community groups here in Brookline. We stand with our Jewish community members and will not waver in our commitment to protect them. If you have any information about this crime, please contact the Detectives Division at 617-730-2711."*
>
> It is easy to condemn, but the hard part is understanding where this hatred that

has become normalized in America and is plaguing the country comes from so that we can be prepared to defend against it and stop it when it appears in whatever disguise it uses. I don't have the answer, but I do believe that the path to undermining and to eliminating this problem starts with a clear understanding of some key facts. For example, on a per capita basis, Jews face far greater risks of being victims of hate crimes than members of any other demographic groups and the threats have been surging. According to the FBI anti-Jewish incidents were 291 incidents per 1 million people in 2023 (the latest available numbers). The next highest was 111 anti-L.G.B.T.Q. incidents per 1 million people. That should frighten all of us and cause us to pay special attention to the specific battle against antisemitism, whether isolated incidents or a pattern of attacks.

But we must also avoid being induced to undermine the ultimate protections that we have against hatred and the discord that is hatred's breeding ground, whether that discord is from private or, alarmingly, governmental actors. While attacking antisemitism we have to also defend against attacks on free speech and other constitutional rights, attacks on other discrete groups of people, and attacks on the institutions that protect and strengthen democracy, such as colleges and universities, the press, and the courts.

So, let's start with condemning hatred when it rears its ugly head in Brookline and supporting the victims of that hatred. But let's not forget the bigger and longer-term problems that we are facing and that are perpetuating this hatred.

Bernard W. Greene
Chair, Brookline Select Board
857-225-0402
bgreene@brooklinema.gov

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinepax@groups io; Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 9:06:46 PM

Apologies for the repost to those who were on the original message -- I didn't notice that Marissa had not sent it to the full listserve.

-- Judith

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:00 PM Judith Vanderkay <jvanderkay@gmail.com> wrote:

> Sorry that I am coming late to this discussion. I am horrified and saddened at this craven display of hate -- as if a kosher butcher shop could actually have anything to do with freeing or not freeing Palestine! I don't care who the perpetrators were, I want them prosecuted to the full extent of the law.
>
> I'm a TMM in Precinct 9 and I feel that my neighborhood has been violated! I stand with my Jewish neighbors and friends against this plague of antisemitism that has swept our nation. I hope we can let everyone know that Brookline will not be intimidated. I would eagerly sign such a statement as Marissa mentions.
>
> -- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:16 AM Marissa Vogt <vogt4brookline@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> > Hi TMMA officers and P9 TMMs,
> >
> > I am heartened to see so many of our TMM colleagues so swiftly and unequivocally condemning the anti-Semitic vandalism at the Butcherie by sending messages to the listserv, but since the listserv is essentially only read by us TMMs it seems like a public statement signed by TMMs and shared more widely could be more meaningful. Perhaps the TMMA officers and/or the P9 TMMs (I believe the Butcherie is located in P9?) could lead in drafting a statement condemning this action (and all anti-Semitism) and stating our support for our Jewish neighbors and businesses, then invite the other ~240 of us TMMs to sign? I would be happy to sign on to such a statement.
> >
> > Thanks,
> > Marissa
> >
> > --
> > Marissa Vogt (she/her/hers)
> > Town Meeting Member, Precinct 6 & Library Trustee
> >
> > On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:56 AM Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > > I also want to give the strongest possible condemnation to the vile people who would do such a thing.
> > >
> > > The State of Israel is not a stand-in for Jewish people. Conflating the two is not only ignorant, it is antisemitic at the highest level. Jewish communities should never be targeted for the actions of a government.

Its gross. And it won't be tolerated here. I hope the police are able to find who did this and punish them accordingly.

Thank you to the members of the select board who have swiftly taken action on this act of violence and issued statements.

Solidarity,
Anthony Buono
TMM P9

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:46 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Adding my voice to the condemnation of this act.
> This is horrifying.
> Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14
>
> > On Jun 15, 2025, at 9:07 AM, David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I agree with you, Charlie. The symbolic nature of the target cannot be construed in any other way but as an anti-Semitic message of hate, intimidation, and violence. Scott has posted the highly disturbing parallels to Crystal Nacht.
> >
> > David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board
> >
> > > On 6/15/2025 8:56:55 AM, Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Call this what it is. It is antisemitic violence. Vandalizing a Jewish grocery store for whatever reason or rationale because it is Jewish is antisemitism. In Brookline. We must all deplore it, universally.
> > >
> > > Charlie Homer
> > > TMM Pct 8
> > >
> > > > On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:52 AM, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:
> > > >
> > > > This is incredibly disturbing. In my view, this is more than vandalism; it is violence. In our community, on our 'Main Street,' where we live and our children go to school.
> > > >
> > > > As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I'm not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.
> > > >
> > > > Carolyn Thall
> > > > Pct 16

<10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>

On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...

<b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.jpeg>

<746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To:	Brookline PAXmembers; "TMMA List Serve"
Cc:	bobw9090@gmail.com; sassanbrookline@gmail.com; jma@abbett.org
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date:	Sunday, June 15, 2025 10:04:47 PM
Attachments:	Free Palestine brick].png BStephens] Israel Had the Courage to Do What Needed to Be Done - NYT.pdf Herald] Brookline Police investigating after brick thrown through kosher grocery store.pdf Antisemitism Is an Urgent Problem. Too Many People Are Making Excuses. - Sun NYT edit"l [mr notes.pdf

---

After recovering from my June 5th WA30 heat-impacted speech debacle (mas soon on that, sorry), and after an encouraging Day Job week, then yesterday in Brookline the great *No Kings!* turnout -- maybe 2k people! (Ps, also Bernie's "*Fighting Oligarchy*") -- the Butcherie hate crime sure is a scary downer, as so many of you have thankfully/forcefully stated. And, while it's shocking, many of us are not in the least bit shocked.

ATTCHED is a story by the *Herald* for tomorrow, which I know most of you would otherwise see; and for the far more who lack NYTimes access, ATTCHD too is today's coincidental *NYT Anti-Semitism editorial*, link for which Scott G sent out, now with (sorry) my maybe annoying highlights (e.g. "the oldest hate"). And while I'm at it, also ATTCHD is re Isr-Iran by their *Brent Stephens*, who's, like Brookline's Jeff Jacoby, a broken clock that's often spot-on re Iran-etc's 8-decades "War" against Israel – and against Jews.

As often, I can't resist 2 personal notes. Like Bob W & Liz L, & I'm sure many herein, and far more people in Brookline, esp'y we "seniors," my family too suffered much *Anti-Semitism*, tho no Holocaust victims My 4 grandparents were all pogrom refugees, the only one I knew (& well) then becoming an early Zionist leader. My Dad heroically overcame USA's 2-decades of Fr. Coughlin, etc. [Must viewing: PBS' "US & the Holocaust"] And, I too experienced some – but far less serous - in college, then in law school, then as a public defender. Then, until 2023 it became more dormant – until Trump's haters, then the Oct. 7 terrorist horrors, Netanyahu's PR failures & Hamas/Iran's successes, etc etc.

So, now Anti-Semitism is obviously baacck, or more precisely, horribly resuscitated & augmenting – *inter alia* why I & many have for 18 mos emphasized the huge – and, yes not 100% -- overlap between *Anti-Zionism* and *Anti-Semitism*, as per the **IHRA definition**, adopted or "embraced" by USA (under Biden), Harvard, over 40 countries, etc. Don't get (Netanyahu critic & 2-state dreamer) me started ...

Marty R.
Martin R. Rosenthal, Esq.,
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**)
c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
listed www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) – out of MANY

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Sassan Zelkha via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 15, 2025 11:01 AM
To: bobw9090@gmail.com
Cc: jma@abbett.org; TMMA List Serve <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight

I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has spoken out clearly and unequivocally against this hateful and antisemitic act. In moments like these, silence or moral equivocation only serves to embolden those who traffic in hate.

There is absolutely no place in our community for antisemitism, hate, or violence—no matter the source or justification. Brookline must remain a place where all residents feel safe, respected, and protected. We cannot allow hatred to take root here.

The most disturbing comment I've seen on Facebook so far came from a Brookline resident who is not only well known in the community but also highly active in the Brookline Peace Coalition. Shockingly, instead of condemning the antisemitic act, they attempted to justify it—something that is both deeply troubling and completely unacceptable. Btw the brike broke butchery sign not the map of Israel as claimed by this individual.





Sassan Zelkha
Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
Pronouns: He/Him/His

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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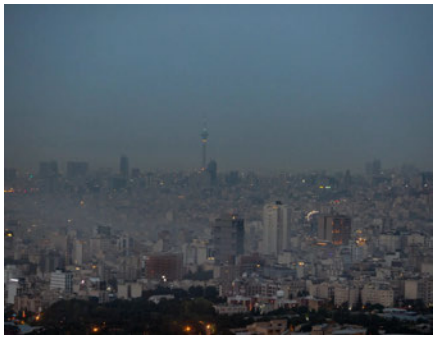
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Free Palestine

The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/13/opinion/iran-israel-strikes.html



BRET STEPHENS

Israel Had the Courage to Do What Needed to Be Done

June 13, 2025

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By Bret Stephens
Opinion Columnist

It may be months or years before we'll know the full results of Israel's attack on Iranian nuclear and military targets, which began early Friday morning and could last for days or weeks. But critics of the strike — and already they are vocal — might at least ask themselves whether Israel had any realistic alternative against an adversary that has repeatedly vowed to wipe it off the map.

Barely a day before the strike, the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency, representing 35 nations, declared that Iran was in violation of its nuclear nonproliferation obligations. The agency's technical report points to "rapid accumulation of highly enriched uranium," a failure by Iran to provide "technically credible answers regarding the nuclear material at three locations" and Iran's "insistence on a unique and unilateral approach to its legally binding obligation."

In plain English, Iran has been deceiving the world for years while gathering the means to build multiple nuclear weapons. In a better world, diplomacy would have forestalled and perhaps eliminated the need for Israeli military action.

But President Trump, who tried to dissuade Israel from striking, failed to get a deal after five rounds of negotiations and noted this week that Tehran had become "much more aggressive" in the talks. Make of his testimony what you will, but it's worth recalling that a much more pliant and patient Biden administration spent years trying to reach an agreement, and also gave up in frustration with Iran's repeated prevarications.

As for other alternatives, the clandestine means of sabotage and targeted assassinations that Israel had long used, and which probably delayed Iran's nuclear breakout moment by years, had plainly run their course — otherwise, Israel would have continued to use them rather than risk Iranian retaliatory strikes using drones and missiles that could overwhelm Israel's defenses.

Those strikes have begun. But they underscore, from an Israeli point of view, how crucial it is that Iran be prevented from being able to mount any of those missiles with a nuclear warhead. Academic theorists in, say, Chicago may be convinced that an Iran armed with nuclear weapons would merely help create a stable balance against a nuclear-armed Israel.

Yet that fails to take into account the millenarian mind-set of some of Iran's theocratic leaders, for whom the ideological objective of destroying Israel may be worth the price of mass martyrdom in a nuclear exchange. It also ignores the prospect that an Iranian nuclear bomb would lead Saudi Arabia, and perhaps Turkey and Egypt, to seek nukes of their own. How stable is a balance of terror if there are three, four or five nuclear powers in the world's most volatile region, operating in uncertain diplomatic combinations, each at daggers drawn with the others?

Know someone who would want to read this? Share the column.

Still, even if Israel had no better options against Iran, it's no guarantee that the strikes will succeed, either in the short or long term. Besides a direct retaliatory strike on Israel, Iran will be tempted to hit back at other targets: ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz, Jewish sites in faraway places, U.S. diplomatic or military installations in the region. The Israeli strike may also drive Iran's nuclear programs further underground, figuratively and literally, accelerating its effort to get nukes while making future attacks more difficult to carry off.

Those risks can't be ignored. But it's worth noting that Iran was doing many of those things without the pretext of an Israeli strike, sometimes directly and sometimes through proxies, such as the Houthis and Hezbollah.

Also worth noting is that Hezbollah has been quiet since Israel's attack. That could always change, but it's a result of its swift decimation at Israeli hands last September. That, too, was denounced by Israel's critics as dangerously escalatory. But now it's paying dividends in the form of constricted Iranian retaliatory options, the end of the pro-Iranian regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and the first possibility in two generations for the Lebanese people finally to govern themselves.

Sometimes military strikes end with blowback. But sometimes they accomplish their goals — as Israel showed when it took out Syria's nuclear reactor in 2007 and Iraq's in 1981. Neither regime, thankfully, ever acquired nuclear weapons.

As for the prospect of Iran now racing toward a bomb, evidence suggests it was already doing so anyway. It will take time, probably years, for Iran to regain its former pace, and it will do so in a severely weakened military, technical and economic state. And it can always be hit again.

It also matters that Iran's leadership has again been bested on its home turf, not by the "Great Satan" of the United States but, much more humiliatingly, by the "Little Satan" of Israel. The weaker and more uncertain the regime looks in the eyes of ordinary Iranians, the likelier it will spark the kinds of mass protests that nearly brought it down in 2022. An end to the regime that has inflicted so much misery on so many people for so many years offers the only sure route to ending the nuclear crisis for good.

I'm writing in the first hours of a conflict that surely still has many surprises in store. It's far too soon to say how it will end. But for those who worry about a future in which one of the world's most awful regimes takes advantage of international irresolution to gain possession of the most dangerous weapons, Israel's strike is a display of clarity and courage for which we may all one day be grateful.

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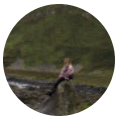
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LOCAL NEWS

Brookline Police launch hate crime investigation after brick thrown through kosher grocery store window



People gather outside The Butcherie at 428 Harvard Street in Brookline to protest after a brick was thrown through the store in an apparent act of hate early Sunday. (Libby O'Neill/Boston Herald)



By **GRACE ZOKOVITCH** | gzokovitch@bostonherald.com
UPDATED: June 15, 2025 at 8:27 PM EDT

Brookline Police are investigating an alleged hate crime after a brick reading “Free Palestine” was thrown through a local kosher grocery store window over night.

“This morning we received a report from the owner of The Butcherie that a brick had been thrown through their window overnight,” Brookline Police said in a statement Sunday. … “Written on the face of the brick in large red letters were the words ‘Free Palestine.’”

Just after midnight Sunday, police said, multiple suspects in masks approached the local kosher grocery store at 428 Harvard St. from Coolidge Street and threw the brick through the window.

The preliminary investigation indicates that there were at least two suspects in the incident, though the exact number was no confirmed, Brookline Police stated. The suspects allegedly fled back down Coolidge Street to an unknown location after the vandalization.

No other businesses appear to have been targeted “as of now,” the police said Sunday.

Brookline Police identified the case as a “hate crime investigation” with malicious damage of property.

“This is deeply concerning and totally unacceptable,” Gov. Maura Healey wrote in a post on X on Sunday. “Acts of violence and intimidation have no place in our communities. We stand with our Jewish neighbors against antisemitism. Everyone deserves to live, pray and do business without fear in Massachusetts.”

The Combined Jewish Philanthropies said Sunday they are monitoring the situation and have reached out to the Brookline Jewish community and the business owners to offer support.

“Our Communal Security team is in close touch with Brookline Police and owners of the business while our Center for Combating Antisemitism is working with JCRC, ADL and other community partners,” the Combined Jewish Philanthropies said in a statement.

The Anti-Defamation League called the act the “latest in a string of attacks on the Jewish community.”

“Holding a Jewish business accountable for the situation in the Middle East is antisemitic, plain and simple and is another example of radical anti-Israel activity resulting in violence against the Jewish community,” the ADL stated.

Rep. Jake Auchincloss released a statement on the incident, saying “both the extreme right and the hard left shoulder blame for mainstreaming antisemitism” and calling for action to combat the rise.

A crowd of supporters and community members demonstrated outside the market on Sunday to show their support.

Brookline Police are actively investigating the incident.

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Brookline police are investigating after a masked suspect threw a brick marked Free Palestine through the window of the Butcherie, a kosher market in the town. (Photo courtesy Brookline police)



Protesters are reflected in the window of The Butcherie, Sunday. (Libby O'Neill/Boston Herald)



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Originally Published: June 15, 2025 at 2:43 PM EDT

2025 › June › 15

The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/14/opinion/antisemitism-jewish-hate.html

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Antisemitism Is an Urgent Problem. Too Many People Are Making Excuses.

June 14, 2025

Listen to this article · 12:03 min Learn more

By The Editorial Board
The editorial board is a group of opinion journalists whose views are informed by expertise, research, debate and certain longstanding values. It is separate from the newsroom.

The list of horrific antisemitic attacks in the United States keeps growing. Two weeks ago in Boulder, Colo., a man set fire to peaceful marchers who were calling for the release of Israeli hostages. Less than two weeks earlier, a young couple was shot to death while leaving an event at the Jewish Museum in Washington. The previous month, an intruder scaled a fence outside the official residence of Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania and threw Molotov cocktails while Mr. Shapiro, his wife and children were asleep inside. In October, a 39-year-old Chicago resident was shot from behind while walking to synagogue.

The United States is experiencing its worst surge of anti-Jewish hate in many decades. Antisemitic hate crimes more than doubled between 2021 and 2023, according to the F.B.I., and appear to have risen further in 2024. On a per capita basis, Jews face far greater risks of being victims of hate crimes than members of any other demographic groups.



Hate crime rates in the United States, 2023





Sources: New York Times analysis of data from the F.B.I., Gallup, Pew Research Center and U.S. Census Bureau

American Jews, who make up about 2 percent of the country's population, are well aware of the threat. Some feel compelled to hide signs of their faith. Synagogues have hired more armed guards who greet worshipers, and Jewish schools have hired guards to protect children and teachers. A small industry of digital specialists combs social media looking for signs of potential attacks, and these specialists have helped law enforcement prevent several.

The response from much of the rest of American society has been insufficient. The upswing in antisemitism deserves outright condemnation. It has already killed people and maimed others, including an 88-year-old Holocaust survivor who was burned in Boulder. And history offers a grim lesson: An increase in antisemitism often accompanies a rise in other hateful violence and human rights violations. Societies that make excuses for attacks against one minority group rarely stop there.

Antisemitism is sometimes described as "the oldest hate." It dates at least to ancient Greece and Egypt, where Jews were mocked for their differences and scapegoated for societal problems. A common trope is that Jews secretly control society and are to blame for its ills. The prejudice has continued through the Inquisition, Russian pogroms and the worst mass murder in history, the Holocaust, which led to the coining of a new term: genocide.

In modern times, many American Jews believed that the United States had left behind this tradition, with some reason. But as Conor Cruise O'Brien, an Irish writer and politician, noted, "Antisemitism is a light sleeper." It tends to re-emerge when societies become polarized and people go looking for somebody to blame. This pattern helps explain why antisemitism began rising, first in Europe and then in the United States, in the 2010s, around the same time that politics coarsened. The anger pulsing through society has manifested itself through animosity toward Jews.

The political right, including President Trump, deserves substantial blame. Yes, he has led a government crackdown against antisemitism on college campuses, and that crackdown has caused colleges to become more serious about addressing the problem. But Mr. Trump has also used the subject as a pretext for his broader campaign against the independence of higher education. The combination risks turning antisemitism into yet another partisan issue, encouraging opponents to dismiss it as one of his invented realities.

Even worse, Mr. Trump had made it normal to hate, by using bigoted language about a range of groups, including immigrants, women and trans Americans. Since he entered the political scene, attacks on Asian, Black, Latino and L.G.B.T. Americans have spiked, according to the F.B.I. While he claims to deplore antisemitism, his actions tell a different story. He has dined with a Holocaust denier, and his Republican Party has nominated antisemites for elected offices, including governor of North Carolina. Mr. Trump himself praised as "very fine people" the attendees of a 2017 march in Charlottesville, Va., that featured the chant "Jews will not replace us." On Jan. 6, 2021, at least one rioter attacking the Capitol screamed that he was looking for "the big Jew," referring to Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, Mr. Schumer has said.

The problem extends to popular culture. Joe Rogan, the podcaster who endorsed Mr. Trump last year, has hosted Holocaust conspiracy theorists on his show. Mr. Rogan once said of Jews, "They run everything." In the Trumpist right, antisemitism has a home.

It also has a home on the progressive left, and the bipartisan nature of the problem has helped make it distinct. Progressives reject many other forms of hate even as some tolerate antisemitism. College campuses, where Jewish students can face social ostracization, have become the clearest example. A decade ago, members of the student government at U.C.L.A. debated blocking a Jewish student from a leadership post, claiming that she might not be able to represent the

entire community. In 2018, spray-painted swastikas appeared on walls at Columbia. At Baruch, Drexel and the University of Pittsburgh, activists have recently called for administrators to cut ties with or close Hillel groups, which support Jewish life. In a national survey by Eitan Hersh of Tufts University and Dahlia Lyss, college students who identified as liberal were more likely than either moderates or conservatives last year to say that they "avoid Jews because of their views."

One explanation is that antisemitism has become conflated with the divisive politics of the current Israel-Hamas war. It is certainly true that criticism of the Israeli government is not the same thing as antisemitism. This editorial board has long defended Israel's right to exist while also criticizing the government for its treatment of Palestinians. Since the current war began, we have abhorred the mass killing of civilians and the destruction of Gaza. Israel's reflexive defenders are wrong, and they hurt their own cause when they equate all such arguments with antisemitism. But some Americans have gone too far in the other direction. They have engaged in whataboutism regarding anti-Jewish hate. They have failed to denounce antisemitism in the unequivocal ways that they properly denounce other bigotry.

Natan Sharansky, the former Soviet dissident, has suggested a "3D" test for when criticism of Israel crosses into antisemitism, with the D's being delegitimization, demonization and double standards. Progressive rhetoric has regularly failed that test in recent years. "Americans generally have greater ability to identify Jew hatred when it comes from the hard right and less ability and comfort to call out Jew hatred when it comes from the hard left or radical Islamism," said Rachel Fish, an adviser to Brandeis University's Presidential Initiative on Antisemitism.

Consider the double standard that leads to a fixation on Israel's human rights record and little campus activism about the records of China, Russia, Sudan, Venezuela or almost any other country. Consider how often left-leaning groups suggest that the world's one Jewish state should not exist and express admiration for Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis — Iran-backed terrorist groups that brag about murdering Jews. Consider how often people use "Zionist" as a slur — an echo of Soviet propaganda from the Cold War — and call for the exclusion of Zionists from public spaces. The definition of a Zionist is somebody who supports the existence of Israel.

Historical comparisons can also be instructive. The period since Oct. 7, 2023, is hardly the first time that global events have contributed to a surge in hate crimes against a specific group. Asian Americans were the victims in 2020 and 2021 after the Covid pandemic began in China. Muslim Americans were the victims after Sept. 11, 2001. In those periods, a few fringe voices, largely on the far right, tried to justify the hate, but the response from much of American society was denunciation. President George W. Bush visited a mosque on Sept. 17, 2001, and proclaimed, "Islam is peace." During Covid, displays of Asian allyship filled social media.

Recent experience has been different in a couple of ways. One, the attacks against Jews have been even more numerous and violent, as the F.B.I. data shows. Two, the condemnation has been quieter and at times tellingly agonized. University leaders have often felt uncomfortable decrying antisemitism without also decrying Islamophobia. Islamophobia, to be clear, is a real problem that deserves attention on its own. Yet antisemitism seems to be a rare type of bigotry that some intellectuals are uncomfortable rebuking without caveat. After the Sept. 11 attacks, they did not feel the need to rebuke both Islamophobia and antisemitism. Nor should they have. People should be able to denounce a growing form of hatred without ritually denouncing other forms.

Alarmingly, the antisemitic rhetoric of both the political right and the left has filtered into justifications for violence. But there has been an asymmetry in recognizing the connections. After a gunman murdered 11 people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018, observers correctly noted that he had become radicalized partly through racist right-wing social media. There has been a similar phenomenon in some recent attacks, this time with the assailants

using the language of the left.

The man who burned marchers in Colorado shouted “Free Palestine!” and (awkwardly) “End Zionist!” The man charged with killing the young Israeli Embassy workers in Washington last month is suspected of having posted an online manifesto titled “Escalate for Gaza, Bring the War Home.” His supporters have since published a petition that includes “Globalize the Intifada.” The demonizing, delegitimizing rhetoric of the right bore some responsibility for the Pittsburgh massacre; the demonizing, delegitimizing rhetoric of the left bears some responsibility for the recent attacks.

Americans should be able to recognize the nuanced nature of many political debates while also recognizing that antisemitism has become an urgent problem. It is a different problem — and in many ways, a narrower one — than racism. Antisemitism has not produced shocking gaps in income, wealth and life expectancy in today’s America. Yet the new antisemitism has left Jewish Americans at a greater risk of being victimized by a hate crime than any other group. Many Jews live with fears that they never expected to experience in this country.

No political arguments or ideological context can justify that bigotry. The choice is between denouncing it fully and encouraging an even broader explosion of hate.

Source photographs by LIgorko and Voisine, via Getty Images.

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A version of this article appears in print on , Section SR, Page 15 of the New York edition with the headline: Antisemitism Is An Urgent Problem

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To:	Brookline PAXmembers; "TMMA List Serve"
Cc:	bobw9090@gmail.com; sassanbrookline@gmail.com; jma@abbett.org
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date:	Sunday, June 15, 2025 10:05:04 PM
Attachments:	Free Palestine brick].png BStephens] Israel Had the Courage to Do What Needed to Be Done - NYT.pdf Herald] Brookline Police investigating after brick thrown through kosher grocery store.pdf Antisemitism Is an Urgent Problem. Too Many People Are Making Excuses. - Sun NYT edit"l [mr notes.pdf

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After recovering from my June 5th WA30 heat-impacted speech debacle (mas soon on that, sorry), and after an encouraging Day Job week, then yesterday in Brookline the great *No Kings!* turnout -- maybe 2k people! (Ps, also Bernie's "*Fighting Oligarchy*") -- the Butcherie hate crime sure is a scary downer, as so many of you have thankfully/forcefully stated. And, while it's shocking, many of us are not in the least bit shocked.

ATTCHED is a story by the *Herald* for tomorrow, which I know most of you would otherwise see; and for the far more who lack NYTimes access, ATTCHD too is today's coincidental *NYT Anti-Semitism editorial*, link for which Scott G sent out, now with (sorry) my maybe annoying highlights (e.g. "the oldest hate"). And while I'm at it, also ATTCHD is re Isr-Iran by their *Brent Stephens*, who's, like Brookline's Jeff Jacoby, a broken clock that's often spot-on re Iran-etc's 8-decades "War" against Israel – and against Jews.

As often, I can't resist 2 personal notes. Like Bob W & Liz L, & I'm sure many herein, and far more people in Brookline, esp'y we "seniors," my family too suffered much *Anti-Semitism*, tho no Holocaust victims My 4 grandparents were all pogrom refugees, the only one I knew (& well) then becoming an early Zionist leader. My Dad heroically overcame USA's 2-decades of Fr. Coughlin, etc. [Must viewing: PBS' "US & the Holocaust"] And, I too experienced some – but far less serous - in college, then in law school, then as a public defender. Then, until 2023 it became more dormant – until Trump's haters, then the Oct. 7 terrorist horrors, Netanyahu's PR failures & Hamas/Iran's successes, etc etc.

So, now Anti-Semitism is obviously baacck, or more precisely, horribly resuscitated & augmenting – *inter alia* why I & many have for 18 mos emphasized the huge – and, yes not 100% -- overlap between *Anti-Zionism* and *Anti-Semitism*, as per the **IHRA definition**, adopted or "embraced" by USA (under Biden), Harvard, over 40 countries, etc. Don't get (Netanyahu critic & 2-state dreamer) me started ...

Marty R.
Martin R. Rosenthal, Esq.,
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**)
c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
listed www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) – out of MANY

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Sassan Zelkha via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 15, 2025 11:01 AM
To: bobw9090@gmail.com
Cc: jma@abbett.org; TMMA List Serve <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight

I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has spoken out clearly and unequivocally against this hateful and antisemitic act. In moments like these, silence or moral equivocation only serves to embolden those who traffic in hate.

There is absolutely no place in our community for antisemitism, hate, or violence—no matter the source or justification. Brookline must remain a place where all residents feel safe, respected, and protected. We cannot allow hatred to take root here.

The most disturbing comment I've seen on Facebook so far came from a Brookline resident who is not only well known in the community but also highly active in the Brookline Peace Coalition. Shockingly, instead of condemning the antisemitic act, they attempted to justify it—something that is both deeply troubling and completely unacceptable. Btw the brike broke butchery sign not the map of Israel as claimed by this individual.





Sassan Zelkha
Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
Pronouns: He/Him/His

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear good people of Brookline,

My in-laws experienced Kristallnacht in Germany -- November 9,1938. They watched their synagogue burn; they listened to the breaking glass in Jewish businesses; their father was taken away to Auschwitz. While the brick that broke the glass at the Butcherie is not an act of our government, it does represent a widespread culture of hate and political violence in our country. The millions of peaceful pro-constitution patriots who marched throughout our country yesterday give me hope. We are the majority.



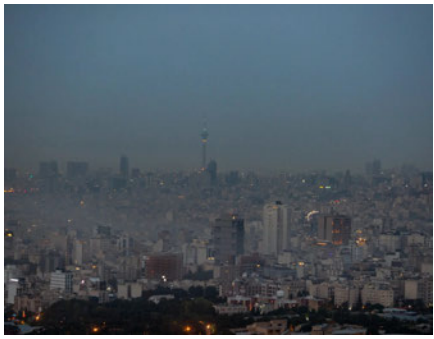
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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]


Free Palestine

The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/13/opinion/iran-israel-strikes.html



BRET STEPHENS

Israel Had the Courage to Do What Needed to Be Done

June 13, 2025

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By Bret Stephens
Opinion Columnist

It may be months or years before we'll know the full results of Israel's attack on Iranian nuclear and military targets, which began early Friday morning and could last for days or weeks. But critics of the strike — and already they are vocal — might at least ask themselves whether Israel had any realistic alternative against an adversary that has repeatedly vowed to wipe it off the map.

Barely a day before the strike, the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency, representing 35 nations, declared that Iran was in violation of its nuclear nonproliferation obligations. The agency's technical report points to "rapid accumulation of highly enriched uranium," a failure by Iran to provide "technically credible answers regarding the nuclear material at three locations" and Iran's "insistence on a unique and unilateral approach to its legally binding obligation."

In plain English, Iran has been deceiving the world for years while gathering the means to build multiple nuclear weapons. In a better world, diplomacy would have forestalled and perhaps eliminated the need for Israeli military action.

But President Trump, who tried to dissuade Israel from striking, failed to get a deal after five rounds of negotiations and noted this week that Tehran had become "much more aggressive" in the talks. Make of his testimony what you will, but it's worth recalling that a much more pliant and patient Biden administration spent years trying to reach an agreement, and also gave up in frustration with Iran's repeated prevarications.

As for other alternatives, the clandestine means of sabotage and targeted assassinations that Israel had long used, and which probably delayed Iran's nuclear breakout moment by years, had plainly run their course — otherwise, Israel would have continued to use them rather than risk Iranian retaliatory strikes using drones and missiles that could overwhelm Israel's defenses.

Those strikes have begun. But they underscore, from an Israeli point of view, how crucial it is that Iran be prevented from being able to mount any of those missiles with a nuclear warhead. Academic theorists in, say, Chicago may be convinced that an Iran armed with nuclear weapons would merely help create a stable balance against a nuclear-armed Israel.

Yet that fails to take into account the millenarian mind-set of some of Iran's theocratic leaders, for whom the ideological objective of destroying Israel may be worth the price of mass martyrdom in a nuclear exchange. It also ignores the prospect that an Iranian nuclear bomb would lead Saudi Arabia, and perhaps Turkey and Egypt, to seek nukes of their own. How stable is a balance of terror if there are three, four or five nuclear powers in the world's most volatile region, operating in uncertain diplomatic combinations, each at daggers drawn with the others?

Know someone who would want to read this? Share the column.

Still, even if Israel had no better options against Iran, it's no guarantee that the strikes will succeed, either in the short or long term. Besides a direct retaliatory strike on Israel, Iran will be tempted to hit back at other targets: ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz, Jewish sites in faraway places, U.S. diplomatic or military installations in the region. The Israeli strike may also drive Iran's nuclear programs further underground, figuratively and literally, accelerating its effort to get nukes while making future attacks more difficult to carry off.

Those risks can't be ignored. But it's worth noting that Iran was doing many of those things without the pretext of an Israeli strike, sometimes directly and sometimes through proxies, such as the Houthis and Hezbollah.

Also worth noting is that Hezbollah has been quiet since Israel's attack. That could always change, but it's a result of its swift decimation at Israeli hands last September. That, too, was denounced by Israel's critics as dangerously escalatory. But now it's paying dividends in the form of constricted Iranian retaliatory options, the end of the pro-Iranian regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and the first possibility in two generations for the Lebanese people finally to govern themselves.

Sometimes military strikes end with blowback. But sometimes they accomplish their goals — as Israel showed when it took out Syria's nuclear reactor in 2007 and Iraq's in 1981. Neither regime, thankfully, ever acquired nuclear weapons.

As for the prospect of Iran now racing toward a bomb, evidence suggests it was already doing so anyway. It will take time, probably years, for Iran to regain its former pace, and it will do so in a severely weakened military, technical and economic state. And it can always be hit again.

It also matters that Iran's leadership has again been bested on its home turf, not by the "Great Satan" of the United States but, much more humiliatingly, by the "Little Satan" of Israel. The weaker and more uncertain the regime looks in the eyes of ordinary Iranians, the likelier it will spark the kinds of mass protests that nearly brought it down in 2022. An end to the regime that has inflicted so much misery on so many people for so many years offers the only sure route to ending the nuclear crisis for good.

I'm writing in the first hours of a conflict that surely still has many surprises in store. It's far too soon to say how it will end. But for those who worry about a future in which one of the world's most awful regimes takes advantage of international irresolution to gain possession of the most dangerous weapons, Israel's strike is a display of clarity and courage for which we may all one day be grateful.

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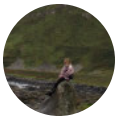
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LOCAL NEWS

Brookline Police launch hate crime investigation after brick thrown through kosher grocery store window



People gather outside The Butcherie at 428 Harvard Street in Brookline to protest after a brick was thrown through the store in an apparent act of hate early Sunday. (Libby O'Neill/Boston Herald)



By **GRACE ZOKOVITCH** | gzokovitch@bostonherald.com
UPDATED: June 15, 2025 at 8:27 PM EDT

Brookline Police are investigating an alleged hate crime after a brick reading “Free Palestine” was thrown through a local kosher grocery store window over night.

“This morning we received a report from the owner of The Butcherie that a brick had been thrown through their window overnight,” Brookline Police said in a statement Sunday. … “Written on the face of the brick in large red letters were the words ‘Free Palestine.’”

Just after midnight Sunday, police said, multiple suspects in masks approached the local kosher grocery store at 428 Harvard St. from Coolidge Street and threw the brick through the window.

The preliminary investigation indicates that there were at least two suspects in the incident, though the exact number was no confirmed, Brookline Police stated. The suspects allegedly fled back down Coolidge Street to an unknown location after the vandalization.

No other businesses appear to have been targeted “as of now,” the police said Sunday.

Brookline Police identified the case as a “hate crime investigation” with malicious damage of property.

“This is deeply concerning and totally unacceptable,” Gov. Maura Healey wrote in a post on X on Sunday. “Acts of violence and intimidation have no place in our communities. We stand with our Jewish neighbors against antisemitism. Everyone deserves to live, pray and do business without fear in Massachusetts.”

The Combined Jewish Philanthropies said Sunday they are monitoring the situation and have reached out to the Brookline Jewish community and the business owners to offer support.

“Our Communal Security team is in close touch with Brookline Police and owners of the business while our Center for Combating Antisemitism is working with JCRC, ADL and other community partners,” the Combined Jewish Philanthropies said in a statement.

The Anti-Defamation League called the act the “latest in a string of attacks on the Jewish community.”

“Holding a Jewish business accountable for the situation in the Middle East is antisemitic, plain and simple and is another example of radical anti-Israel activity resulting in violence against the Jewish community,” the ADL stated.

Rep. Jake Auchincloss released a statement on the incident, saying “both the extreme right and the hard left shoulder blame for mainstreaming antisemitism” and calling for action to combat the rise.

A crowd of supporters and community members demonstrated outside the market on Sunday to show their support.

Brookline Police are actively investigating the incident.

“Any resident in the area who may have video related to this crime are asked to contact the Brookline Detective Division at 617-730-2711,” Brookline Police said.



Brookline police are investigating after a masked suspect threw a brick marked Free Palestine through the window of the Butcherie, a kosher market in the town. (Photo courtesy Brookline police)



Protesters are reflected in the window of The Butcherie, Sunday. (Libby O'Neill/Boston Herald)



People gather outside The Butcherie on Harvard Street in Brookline to show their support after a brick was thrown through the store in an apparent act of hate early Sunday. (Libby O'Neill/Boston Herald)

Originally Published: June 15, 2025 at 2:43 PM EDT

2025 › June › 15

The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/14/opinion/antisemitism-jewish-hate.html

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June 14, 2025

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By The Editorial Board
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Hate crime rates in the United States, 2023





Sources: New York Times analysis of data from the F.B.I., Gallup, Pew Research Center and U.S. Census Bureau

American Jews, who make up about 2 percent of the country's population, are well aware of the threat. Some feel compelled to hide signs of their faith. Synagogues have hired more armed guards who greet worshipers, and Jewish schools have hired guards to protect children and teachers. A small industry of digital specialists combs social media looking for signs of potential attacks, and these specialists have helped law enforcement prevent several.

The response from much of the rest of American society has been insufficient. The upswing in antisemitism deserves outright condemnation. It has already killed people and maimed others, including an 88-year-old Holocaust survivor who was burned in Boulder. And history offers a grim lesson: An increase in antisemitism often accompanies a rise in other hateful violence and human rights violations. Societies that make excuses for attacks against one minority group rarely stop there.

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The political right, including President Trump, deserves substantial blame. Yes, he has led a government crackdown against antisemitism on college campuses, and that crackdown has caused colleges to become more serious about addressing the problem. But Mr. Trump has also used the subject as a pretext for his broader campaign against the independence of higher education. The combination risks turning antisemitism into yet another partisan issue, encouraging opponents to dismiss it as one of his invented realities.

Even worse, Mr. Trump had made it normal to hate, by using bigoted language about a range of groups, including immigrants, women and trans Americans. Since he entered the political scene, attacks on Asian, Black, Latino and L.G.B.T. Americans have spiked, according to the F.B.I. While he claims to deplore antisemitism, his actions tell a different story. He has dined with a Holocaust denier, and his Republican Party has nominated antisemites for elected offices, including governor of North Carolina. Mr. Trump himself praised as "very fine people" the attendees of a 2017 march in Charlottesville, Va., that featured the chant "Jews will not replace us." On Jan. 6, 2021, at least one rioter attacking the Capitol screamed that he was looking for "the big Jew," referring to Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, Mr. Schumer has said.

The problem extends to popular culture. Joe Rogan, the podcaster who endorsed Mr. Trump last year, has hosted Holocaust conspiracy theorists on his show. Mr. Rogan once said of Jews, "They run everything." In the Trumpist right, antisemitism has a home.

It also has a home on the progressive left, and the bipartisan nature of the problem has helped make it distinct. Progressives reject many other forms of hate even as some tolerate antisemitism. College campuses, where Jewish students can face social ostracization, have become the clearest example. A decade ago, members of the student government at U.C.L.A. debated blocking a Jewish student from a leadership post, claiming that she might not be able to represent the

entire community. In 2018, spray-painted swastikas appeared on walls at Columbia. At Baruch, Drexel and the University of Pittsburgh, activists have recently called for administrators to cut ties with or close Hillel groups, which support Jewish life. In a national survey by Eitan Hersh of Tufts University and Dahlia Lyss, college students who identified as liberal were more likely than either moderates or conservatives last year to say that they "avoid Jews because of their views."

One explanation is that antisemitism has become conflated with the divisive politics of the current Israel-Hamas war. It is certainly true that criticism of the Israeli government is not the same thing as antisemitism. This editorial board has long defended Israel's right to exist while also criticizing the government for its treatment of Palestinians. Since the current war began, we have abhorred the mass killing of civilians and the destruction of Gaza. Israel's reflexive defenders are wrong, and they hurt their own cause when they equate all such arguments with antisemitism. But some Americans have gone too far in the other direction. They have engaged in whataboutism regarding anti-Jewish hate. They have failed to denounce antisemitism in the unequivocal ways that they properly denounce other bigotry.

Natan Sharansky, the former Soviet dissident, has suggested a "3D" test for when criticism of Israel crosses into antisemitism, with the D's being delegitimization, demonization and double standards. Progressive rhetoric has regularly failed that test in recent years. "Americans generally have greater ability to identify Jew hatred when it comes from the hard right and less ability and comfort to call out Jew hatred when it comes from the hard left or radical Islamism," said Rachel Fish, an adviser to Brandeis University's Presidential Initiative on Antisemitism.

Consider the double standard that leads to a fixation on Israel's human rights record and little campus activism about the records of China, Russia, Sudan, Venezuela or almost any other country. Consider how often left-leaning groups suggest that the world's one Jewish state should not exist and express admiration for Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis — Iran-backed terrorist groups that brag about murdering Jews. Consider how often people use "Zionist" as a slur — an echo of Soviet propaganda from the Cold War — and call for the exclusion of Zionists from public spaces. The definition of a Zionist is somebody who supports the existence of Israel.

Historical comparisons can also be instructive. The period since Oct. 7, 2023, is hardly the first time that global events have contributed to a surge in hate crimes against a specific group. Asian Americans were the victims in 2020 and 2021 after the Covid pandemic began in China. Muslim Americans were the victims after Sept. 11, 2001. In those periods, a few fringe voices, largely on the far right, tried to justify the hate, but the response from much of American society was denunciation. President George W. Bush visited a mosque on Sept. 17, 2001, and proclaimed, "Islam is peace." During Covid, displays of Asian allyship filled social media.

Recent experience has been different in a couple of ways. One, the attacks against Jews have been even more numerous and violent, as the F.B.I. data shows. Two, the condemnation has been quieter and at times tellingly agonized. University leaders have often felt uncomfortable decrying antisemitism without also decrying Islamophobia. Islamophobia, to be clear, is a real problem that deserves attention on its own. Yet antisemitism seems to be a rare type of bigotry that some intellectuals are uncomfortable rebuking without caveat. After the Sept. 11 attacks, they did not feel the need to rebuke both Islamophobia and antisemitism. Nor should they have. People should be able to denounce a growing form of hatred without ritually denouncing other forms.

Alarmingly, the antisemitic rhetoric of both the political right and the left has filtered into justifications for violence. But there has been an asymmetry in recognizing the connections. After a gunman murdered 11 people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018, observers correctly noted that he had become radicalized partly through racist right-wing social media. There has been a similar phenomenon in some recent attacks, this time with the assailants

using the language of the left.

The man who burned marchers in Colorado shouted “Free Palestine!” and (awkwardly) “End Zionist!” The man charged with killing the young Israeli Embassy workers in Washington last month is suspected of having posted an online manifesto titled “Escalate for Gaza, Bring the War Home.” His supporters have since published a petition that includes “Globalize the Intifada.” The demonizing, delegitimizing rhetoric of the right bore some responsibility for the Pittsburgh massacre; the demonizing, delegitimizing rhetoric of the left bears some responsibility for the recent attacks.

Americans should be able to recognize the nuanced nature of many political debates while also recognizing that antisemitism has become an urgent problem. It is a different problem — and in many ways, a narrower one — than racism. Antisemitism has not produced shocking gaps in income, wealth and life expectancy in today’s America. Yet the new antisemitism has left Jewish Americans at a greater risk of being victimized by a hate crime than any other group. Many Jews live with fears that they never expected to experience in this country.

No political arguments or ideological context can justify that bigotry. The choice is between denouncing it fully and encouraging an even broader explosion of hate.

Source photographs by LIgorko and Voisine, via Getty Images.

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A version of this article appears in print on , Section SR, Page 15 of the New York edition with the headline: Antisemitism Is An Urgent Problem

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Eric McNulty via groups.io <ejmcnu=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bgreene@brooklinema.gov
Cc: TMMA listserv; Charles Carey; Jen Paster; Christina Metcalf
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Sunday, June 15, 2025 10:10:00 PM

Thank you for these words, Chair Greene. We must meet this as a community on all fronts: a rigorous investigation, solidarity neighbor-to-neighbor, increased patronage of businesses like The Butcherie, and ongoing education. Each act of violence must be met with an overwhelming surge of caring and resolve. Daily acts of love and compassion will make us too strong for hate to stand a chance.

Eric McNulty
TMM P12

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 4:03 PM Bernard Greene via groups.io <bgreene=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:

> I join with other Select Board members and Town leaders in deploring the attack this morning on The Butcherie, an important and beloved kosher supermarket in Brookline that serves the entire greater Boston region. All of Brookline should be united in condemning the attack on this venerable Jewish business.
>
> The following is a statement issued by Town Administrator Chas Carey:
>
> > *"This attack on a Jewish establishment that serves all members of our community with care and kindness is antisemitic, plain and simple. Terrorizing a kosher butcher's shop by throwing a brick through its window with a message that suggests it is somehow responsible for the geopolitical situation in the Middle East is appalling and antithetical to everything Brookline stands for. We unequivocally condemn this hateful act of violence against our Jewish community members and will bring its perpetrators to justice.*
> >
> > *"The Police Department, in coordination with state and federal law enforcement, are providing enhanced support for Jewish community groups here in Brookline. We stand with our Jewish community members and will not waver in our commitment to protect them. If you have any information about this crime, please contact the Detectives Division at 617-730-2711."*
>
> It is easy to condemn, but the hard part is understanding where this hatred that has become normalized in America and is plaguing the country comes from so that we can be prepared to defend against it and stop it when it appears in whatever disguise it uses. I don't have the answer, but I do believe that the path to undermining and to eliminating this problem starts with a clear understanding of some key facts. For example, on a per capita basis, Jews face far greater risks of being victims of hate crimes than members of any other demographic groups and the threats have been surging. According to the FBI anti-Jewish incidents were 291 incidents per 1 million people in 2023 (the latest available numbers). The next highest was 111 anti-L.G.B.T.Q. incidents per 1 million people. That should frighten all of us and cause us to pay special attention to the specific battle against antisemitism, whether

isolated incidents or a pattern of attacks.

But we must also avoid being induced to undermine the ultimate protections that we have against hatred and the discord that is hatred's breeding ground, whether that discord is from private or, alarmingly, governmental actors. While attacking antisemitism we have to also defend against attacks on free speech and other constitutional rights, attacks on other discrete groups of people, and attacks on the institutions that protect and strengthen democracy, such as colleges and universities, the press, and the courts.

So, let's start with condemning hatred when it rears its ugly head in Brookline and supporting the victims of that hatred. But let's not forget the bigger and longer-term problems that we are facing and that are perpetuating this hatred.

Bernard W. Greene
Chair, Brookline Select Board
857-225-0402
bgreene@brooklinema.gov

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John VanScoyoc via groups.io <jvanscoyoc0=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bgreene@brooklinema.gov
Cc: TMMA listserv; Charles Carey; Jen Paster; Christina Metcalf
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 1:32:34 AM

I wish to thank Chair Greene and Town Administrator Carey for expressing Brookline's unreserved condemnation of the attack on the Butcherie and the antisemitism behind it. Their statements, and the efforts of the Brookline Police to identify the perpetrators, have my whole-hearted support. -- John VanScoyoc

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Bernard W. Greene
Chair, Brookline Select Board
857-225-0402
bgreene@brooklinema.gov

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John VanScoyoc via groups.io <jvanscoyoc0=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bgreene@brooklinema.gov
Cc: TMMA listserv; Charles Carey; Jen Paster; Christina Metcalf
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 1:32:39 AM

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Day via groups.io <dspencerday=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: John Bassett
Cc: TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 12:35:26 AM

John, Yikes! That is the exact opposite of my intent. The point of that scenario was to highlight that no one (such as the person quoted in Mr.Zelkhe's email) should pass off the violent act of throwing a brick through a window as merely "a political message". It's something I am heartened to see that we are all condemning. — David

On Jun 15, 2025, at 7:52 PM, John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com> wrote:

I share your anger at this politically motivated hate crime. But I don't like your sentence below. Writing how would you like a brick thrown through your window suggests retaliation and can be read as a threat.
John Bassett
p6

> I wonder if the Facebook post's author would wish to have disagreement with his views, whatever they are, be expressed on a brick hurled through his living room window?

On Sunday, June 15, 2025 at 01:33:43 PM EDT, David Day via groups.io <dspencerday=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I am moved by all of the comments being made on this list. I, too, am disgusted by this hateful and violent act by the perpetrators. As Sassan Zelkha notes, in moments like these, silence and moral equivocation can be misinterpreted as acceptance or even support, so it is good that we share our community's outrage at this attack on our neighbors … well, on all of us.

The New York Times editorial cited by Scott Gladstone is particularly insightful on how the complexities of global politics can be a pretext to (re-)introduce anti-semitism and other forms of hate of one group towards another. In this light the Facebook post cited by Mr. Zelkha is particularly disturbing. I wonder if the Facebook post's author would wish to have disagreement with his views, whatever they are, be expressed on a brick hurled through his living room window? The very act betrays the dehumanizing motivations of the criminals.

David Day
Pct 16

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 11:01 AM, Sassan Zelkha via groups.io <sassanbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has spoken out clearly and unequivocally against this hateful and antisemitic act. In moments like these, silence or moral equivocation only serves to embolden those who traffic in hate.

There is absolutely no place in our community for antisemitism, hate, or violence—no matter the source or justification. Brookline must remain a place where all residents feel safe, respected, and protected. We cannot allow hatred to take root here.

The most disturbing comment I've seen on Facebook so far came from a Brookline resident who is not only well known in the community but also highly active in the Brookline Peace Coalition. Shockingly, instead of condemning the antisemitic act, they attempted to justify it—something that is both deeply troubling and completely unacceptable. Btw the brike broke butchery sign not the map of Israel as claimed by this individual.
<IMG_9741.jpeg>

<B76FAAAF-E102-4469-B823-7CF277BFCDA9.png>

Sassan Zelkha
Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
Pronouns: He/Him/His

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear good people of Brookline,
> My in-laws experienced Kristallnacht in Germany -- November 9,1938. They watched their synagogue burn; they listened to the breaking glass in Jewish businesses; their father was taken away to Auschwitz. While the brick that broke the glass at the Butcherie is not an act of our government, it does represent a widespread culture of hate and political violence in our country. The millions of peaceful pro-constitution patriots who marched throughout our country yesterday give me hope. We are the majority.
> Bob Weintraub
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 8:11 AM Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...
> >
> > <b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.JPG>
> > <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.JPG>

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Liz Linder via groups.io <liz=lizlinder.com@groups.io>
To: jvanderkay@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinepax@groups io; Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 12:42:51 AM

Thanks Judith - and Marissa - i would be happy to sign a statement.

Liz Linder
TMM P4

Liz Linder
Photography, Inc.
cell/ 617-818-6537
studio/ 617-232-3202
http://www.lizlinder.com
http://www.lizlinder.com/blog

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 9:06 PM, Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Apologies for the repost to those who were on the original message -- I didn't notice that Marissa had not sent it to the full listserve.
>
> -- Judith
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:00 PM Judith Vanderkay <jvanderkay@gmail.com> wrote:
>> Sorry that I am coming late to this discussion. I am horrified and saddened at this craven display of hate -- as if a kosher butcher shop could actually have anything to do with freeing or not freeing Palestine! I don't care who the perpetrators were, I want them prosecuted to the full extent of the law.
>>
>> I'm a TMM in Precinct 9 and I feel that my neighborhood has been violated! I stand with my Jewish neighbors and friends against this plague of antisemitism that has swept our nation. I hope we can let everyone know that Brookline will not be intimidated. I would eagerly sign such a statement as Marissa mentions.
>>
>> -- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee
>>
>> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:16 AM Marissa Vogt <vogt4brookline@gmail.com> wrote:
>>> Hi TMMA officers and P9 TMMs,
>>>
>>> I am heartened to see so many of our TMM colleagues so swiftly and unequivocally condemning the anti-Semitic vandalism at the Butcherie by sending messages to the listserv, but since the listserv is essentially only read by us TMMs it seems like a public statement signed by TMMs and shared more widely could be more meaningful. Perhaps the TMMA officers and/or the P9 TMMs (I believe the Butcherie is located in P9?) could lead in drafting a statement condemning this action (and all anti-Semitism) and stating our support for our Jewish neighbors and businesses, then invite the other ~240 of us TMMs to sign? I would be happy to sign on to such a statement.
>>>
>>> Thanks,
>>> Marissa

--
Marissa Vogt (she/her/hers)
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 6 & Library Trustee

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:56 AM Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I also want to give the strongest possible condemnation to the vile people who would do such a thing.
>
> The State of Israel is not a stand-in for Jewish people. Conflating the two is not only ignorant, it is antisemitic at the highest level. Jewish communities should never be targeted for the actions of a government.
>
> Its gross. And it won't be tolerated here. I hope the police are able to find who did this and punish them accordingly.
>
> Thank you to the members of the select board who have swiftly taken action on this act of violence and issued statements.
>
> Solidarity,
> Anthony Buono
> TMM P9
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:46 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Adding my voice to the condemnation of this act.
> > This is horrifying.
> > Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14
> >
> > > On Jun 15, 2025, at 9:07 AM, David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > I agree with you, Charlie. The symbolic nature of the target cannot be construed in any other way but as an anti-Semitic message of hate, intimidation, and violence. Scott has posted the highly disturbing parallels to Crystal Nacht.
> > >
> > > David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board
> > >
> > > > On 6/15/2025 8:56:55 AM, Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > > >
> > > > Call this what it is. It is antisemitic violence. Vandalizing a Jewish grocery store for whatever reason or rationale because it is Jewish is antisemitism. In Brookline. We must all deplore it, universally.
> > > >
> > > > Charlie Homer
> > > > TMM Pct 8
> > > >
> > > > > On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:52 AM, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:

This is incredibly disturbing. In my view, this is more than vandalism; it is violence. In our community, on our 'Main Street,' where we live and our children go to school.

As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I'm not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.

Carolyn Thall
Pct 16

<10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>

On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...

<b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.jpeg>

<746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io>
To: David S Day
Cc: John Bassett; Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:03:37 AM

With all due deep respect for you, John Basset, I would not read David Day's words as threatening. I found his words more fitting of this circumstance than the standard "we won't stand for it" or "hate has no place here." (Spoiler alert: hate apparently does have a place here.)

In my experience, one of the most frustrating things about trying to educate people about antisemitism, and one of the most hurtful parts of seeing tepid responses to it, is dealing with double standards. I think David was illustrating that.

It is important because double/different standards are part of what has allowed antisemitism to fester and grow.

In recent years, a binary "oppressor-oppressed" narrative has become synonymous with "justice" and righteousness. This absolutist narrative leaves little room for the classic liberal (who deals in nuance), and no room for acknowledging antisemitism; because in the narrative, Israel (therefore Zionists and therefore Jews) is characterized as colonist/oppressor.

This narrative is pervasive, including in public schools. I believe this has laid the ground for the antisemitism crisis that has reached our doorstep and crossed the threshold. Or in this case, come crashing through a Jew's window on a brick.

I appreciate this conversation.

Carolyn Thall
Pct 16

On Jun 16, 2025, at 12:35 AM, David Day via groups.io <dspencerday=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

John, Yikes! That is the exact opposite of my intent. The point of that scenario was to highlight that no one (such as the person quoted in Mr.Zelkhe's email) should pass off the violent act of throwing a brick through a window as merely "a political message". It's something I am heartened to see that we are all condemning. — David

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John Bassett
p6

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I am moved by all of the comments being made on this list. I, too, am disgusted by this hateful and violent act by the perpetrators. As Sassan Zelkha notes, in moments like these, silence and moral equivocation can be misinterpreted as acceptance or even support, so it is good that we share our community's outrage at this attack on our neighbors … well, on all of us.

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David Day
Pct 16

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by this individual.
<IMG_9741.jpeg>

<B76FAAAF-E102-4469-B823-7CF277BFCDA9.png>

Sassan Zelkha
Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
Pronouns: He/Him/His

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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> > <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.JPG>

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Tonight! Brookline Neighborhood Alliance Annual Meeting
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:14:22 AM

Colleagues:
We hope you will come tonight to celebrate these neighbors who bring light to our community, especially as we are experiencing so much darkness.
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14, Co-Chair of the BNA with Dan Saltzman

The Brookline Neighborhood Alliance's Annual Meeting will take place on Monday, June 16th in the Select Board's Hearing Room on the sixth floor in Town Hall. Light refreshments will be offered at 6:30 pm, and the meeting will begin at 7:00 pm.

The business portion of the meeting, which includes the election of Executive Board members and BNA officers, will be followed by the presentation of BNA Leadership Awards.

This year’s awardees are:

Rachel Silverman and Thrifty Threads for working to cultivate community, promote sustainability, and foster supportive connections within Brookline and beyond.

Griggs Park Neighborhood Association for its work to improve stewardship of Griggs Park, build community, and beautify Brookline.

Arthur Conquest for his long-standing and tireless work and advocacy on behalf of Brookline Adult and Community Education.

Special BNA Service Awards to Lee Cooke-Childs and John Bassett

---

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM; leroseman@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Tonight! Brookline Neighborhood Alliance Annual Meeting
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:29:57 AM

Wow! Griggs Park is my favorite in Brookline. And Arthur, he has done so much for Brookline in so many ways, as have Lee and John!

My brother's in town so I will not be able to make it tonight. Will there be a recording?

On Monday, June 16, 2025 at 08:14:22 AM EDT, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: David S Day; cthall68@comcast.net
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:30:56 AM

Hi David and Carolyn,

My critical comment is not very important. The general feelings of support for Jews and anger at this anti semitic crime are what matters. That said, regardless of the intent of the writer the words stand and can be read as a threat.

Thanks for your responses.
John Bassett
p6

On Monday, June 16, 2025 at 08:03:37 AM EDT, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:

> With all due deep respect for you, John Basset, I would not read David Day's words as threatening. I found his words more fitting of this circumstance than the standard "we won't stand for it" or "hate has no place here." (Spoiler alert: hate apparently does have a place here.)
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> This narrative is pervasive, including in public schools. I believe this has laid the ground for the antisemitism crisis that has reached our doorstep and crossed the threshold. Or in this case, come crashing through a Jew's window on a brick.
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> I appreciate this conversation.
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> Carolyn Thall
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> > > > <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.JPG>

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline.News; BrooklineTMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] In-depth report: What can Brookline learn from Framingham about becoming a city?
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 9:43:25 AM

TMMs:

While you may be hoping that the online discussion of city vs. town government may have lost some of its steam, I expect it to continue unabated until the question of a charter commission is finally resolved. For those of you who do not subscribe to Brookline News, please see the article in today's edition about the Framingham experience in converting to a city. It is very well researched and quite instructive.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

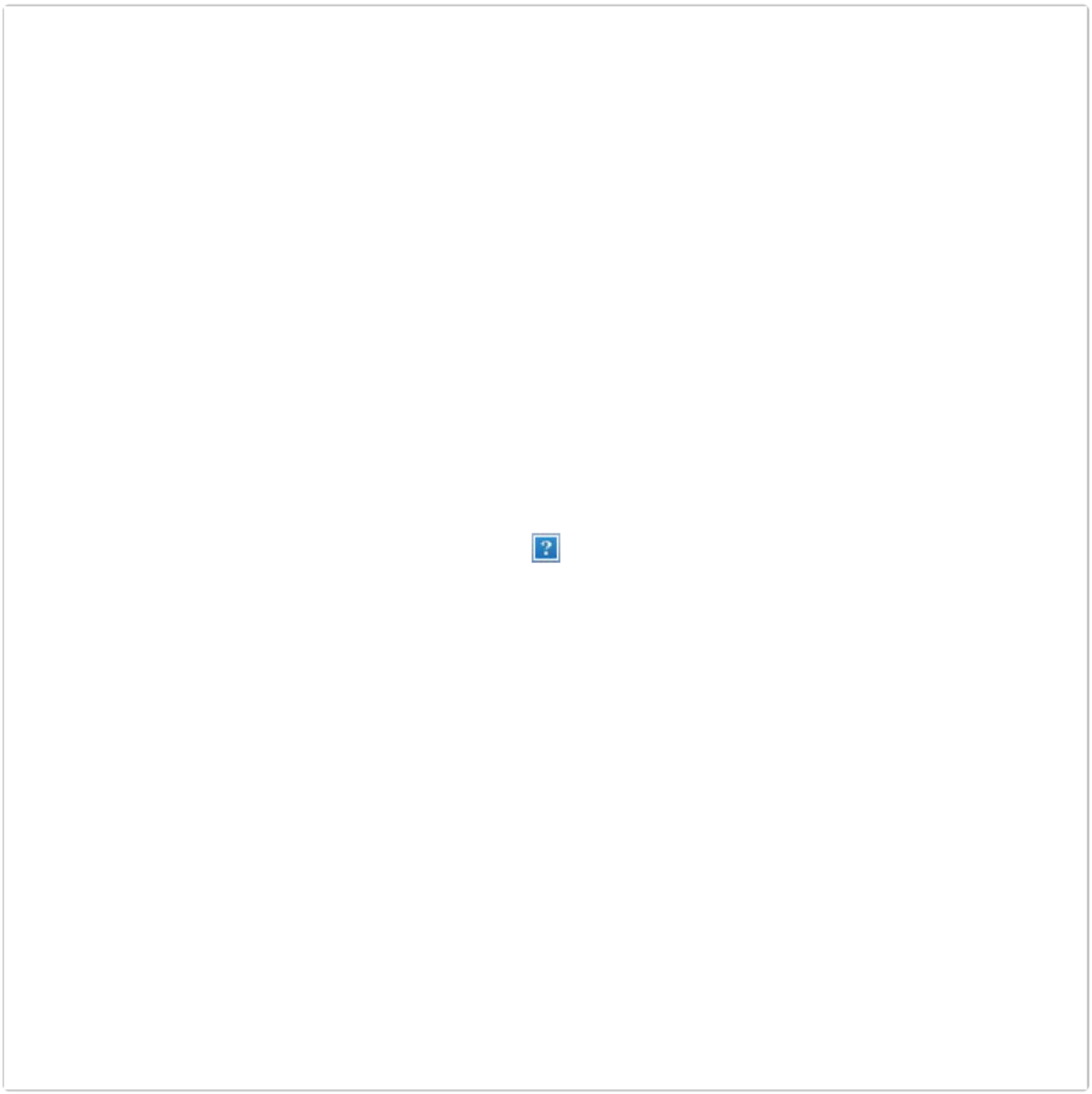
Former Moderator's Committee member

P.S. Also for those who are not a Brookline News subscriber, I strongly suggest that you

become one. It is our best source of local news.

From: Brookline.News <newsletter@brookline.news>

Sent: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:02 AM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Subject: In-depth report: What can Brookline learn from Framingham about becoming a city?



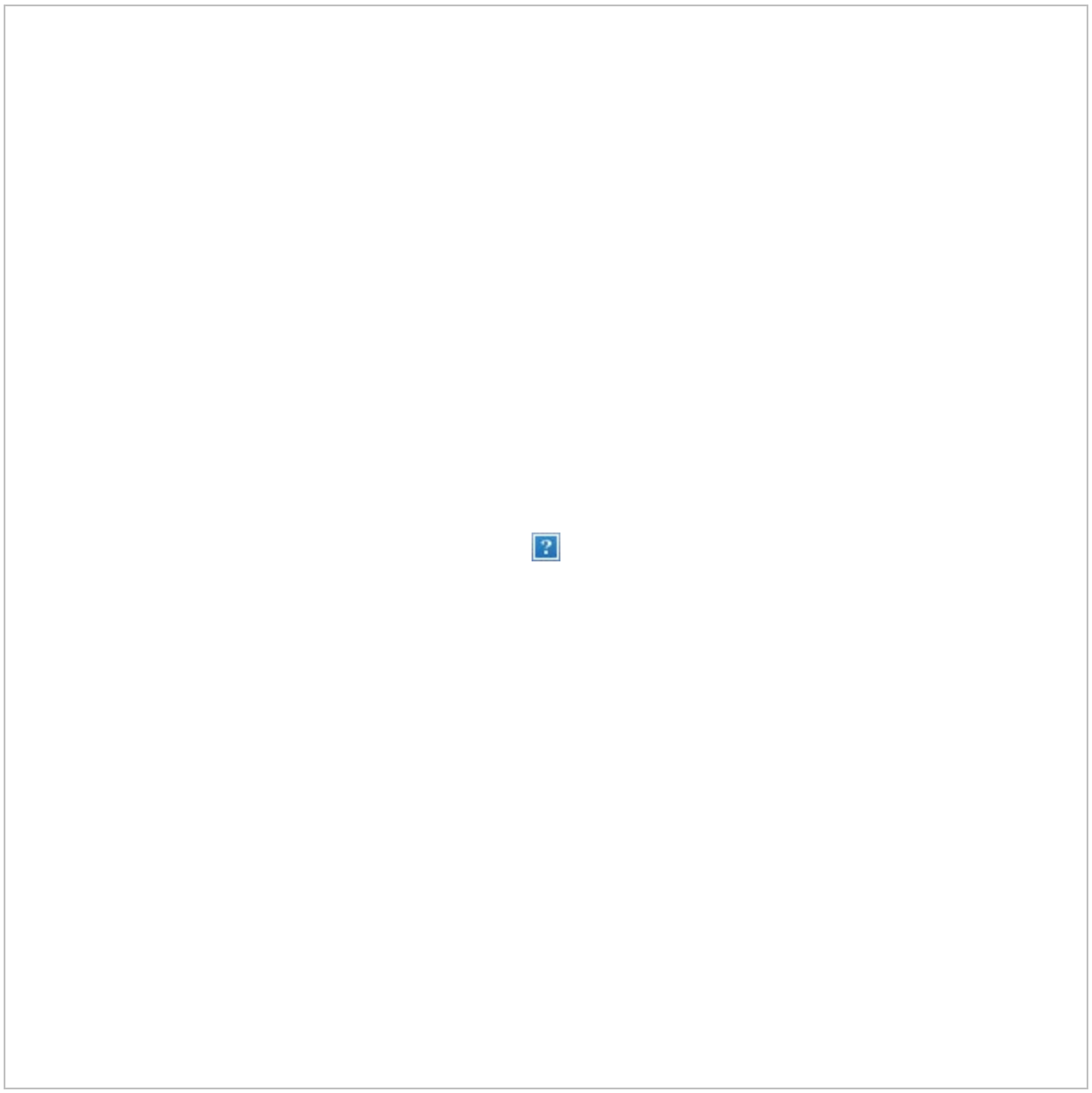
Sandy: There's an important question looming over everything happening in Brookline's town government these days: Would things work better or worse if it was a city?

With a possible ballot question coming next May, we looked at Framingham as one way of trying to start answering that question. Why Framingham? It was the last place in Massachusetts to make that transition, back in 2018.

Reporter Sean Flannelly spent the last few months talking to about a dozen residents and current and former elected officials in Framingham. You probably won't be surprised to hear that there is still some disagreement about the change. But we hope that reading about what Framingham has learned is helpful to residents and voters in Brookline who are trying to understand what it would mean for their town to become a city.

Thanks for reading.
Sam Mintz, editor

As Brookline considers becoming a city, what can it learn from Framingham?



Seven years after becoming Massachusetts' most recent town-to-city convert, Framingham officials offer a mixed verdict: yes, many believe city

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government is faster and more efficient, but it also brought unexpected political tensions, a rocky first mayoral term marked by public feuds, and some charter details they wish they could do ove

As Brookline weighs the same transition that would make it the state's 60th city, Framingham's experience offers cautionary tales and practical lessons about what works—and what doesn't—when a Massachusetts town decides to grow up.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: cthall68@comcast.net
Cc: David S Day; John Bassett; Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 10:55:57 AM

Thank you, Carolyn. As a lawyer for more than 30 years, I am burdened by the practice of examining written and spoken language for its intent, and as a former prosecutor, I am more than familiar with language that is intended to constitute a threat. Coupled with my knowledge of my fellow TMM David Day - who in addition to other attributes is kind, thoughtful, and empathic, I read the statement as he intended. I also know John Bassett as a kind, thoughtful and empathic person, who has long supported what is good in this community. I am glad there has been an opportunity here to course correct and clarify the record. With that said, I am confident that our extraordinarily professional police department will do their best to bring those who are responsible for this abhorrent criminal act to justice. Regards, Joslin Murphy (P16)

On Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 8:03 AM Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:

> With all due deep respect for you, John Basset, I would not read David Day's words as threatening. I found his words more fitting of this circumstance than the standard "we won't stand for it" or "hate has no place here." (Spoiler alert: hate apparently does have a place here.)
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<IMG_9741.jpeg>

<B76FAAAF-E102-4469-B823-7CF277BFCDA9.png>

Sassan Zelkha
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Pronouns: He/Him/His

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--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Emily Dolbear via groups.io <emily.dolbear=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 11:40:31 AM

Was there any response to Marissa's suggestion of a TM statement that we could sign in support?

Emily Dolbear
TMM P12

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io>
To: emily.dolbear@gmail.com
Cc: BrooklineTMMA; Anthony Buono; Marissa Vogt
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 11:48:23 AM

So many important, strong, and supportive statements have been posted here — thanks to everyone and especially to those posting ways to take meaningful action. I also hope the TMMA board will take Marissa up on her idea to combine all of these into a statement for TMMs to sign.

Rebecca Stone
TMM 3

> On Jun 16, 2025, at 11:40 AM, Emily Dolbear via groups.io <emily.dolbear=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Was there any response to Marissa's suggestion of a TM statement that we could sign in support?
>
> Emily Dolbear
> TMM P12

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Rebecca Stone
Cc: emily.dolbear@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA; Marissa Vogt
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 11:50:26 AM

Hi All,

The TMMA board has the full intention of taking up Marissa's suggestion! We will keep you all updated as we plan how to do so.

Best,
Anthony Buono
TMM 9

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline.News; BrooklineTMMA; sgadsby@foleyhoag.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] In-depth report: What can Brookline learn from Framingham about becoming a city?
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 12:15:46 PM

Slightly off-topic.

You may have seen that Mayor Wu has started running spots alleging that pro-Trump interests have given a million dollars to Josh Kraft, who is running against her. (I confess that I have not examined the ads closely--it could be that those involved have created a Super-PAC.) If true, that shows that there is very big money in the campaign in Boston. It also shows that Mayor Wu has raised a substantial amount.

Clearly, should Brookline become a city, races here would attract only a small fraction of those in Boston. Still, the amounts involved would almost certainly dwarf any that we have seen. I don't think that would be a good thing, for many reasons.

(I am not referring, here, to the anti-Wu spots that have been running for some weeks. I understand that the mayor has alleged that those are paid for by Trump allies, but they are in a different category from advertisements on the campaign itself.)

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 16, 2025 at 09:43:25 AM EDT, Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

TMMs:

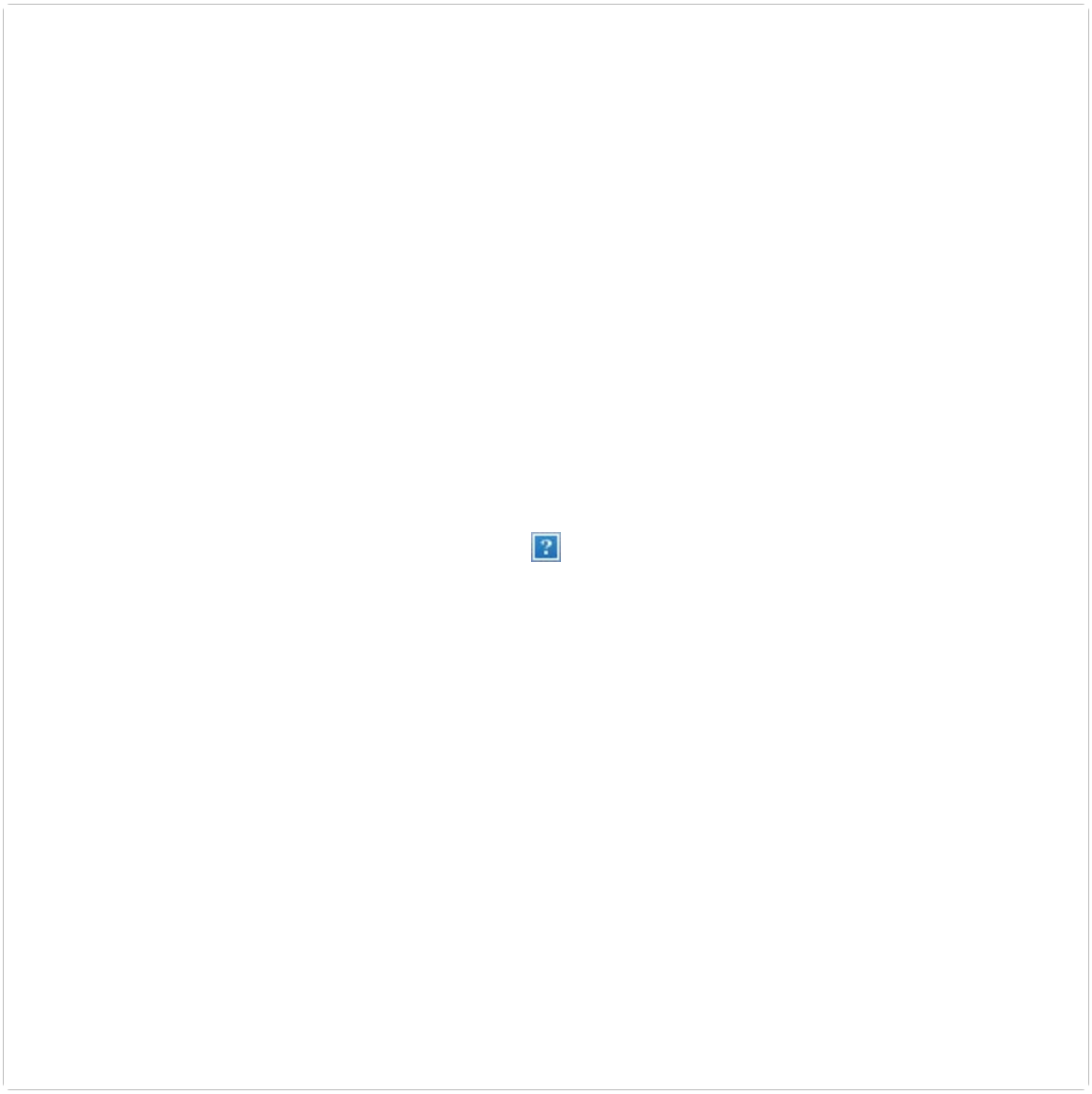
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Regards, Sandy Gadsby
Former Moderator's Committee member

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From: Brookline.News <newsletter@brookline.news>
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:02 AM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Subject: In-depth report: What can Brookline learn from Framingham about becoming a city?

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Sandy: There's an important question looming over everything happening in Brookline's town government these days: Would things work better or worse if it was a city?

With a possible ballot question coming next May, we looked at Framingham as one way of trying to start answering that question. Why Framingham? It was the last place in Massachusetts to make that transition, back in 2018.

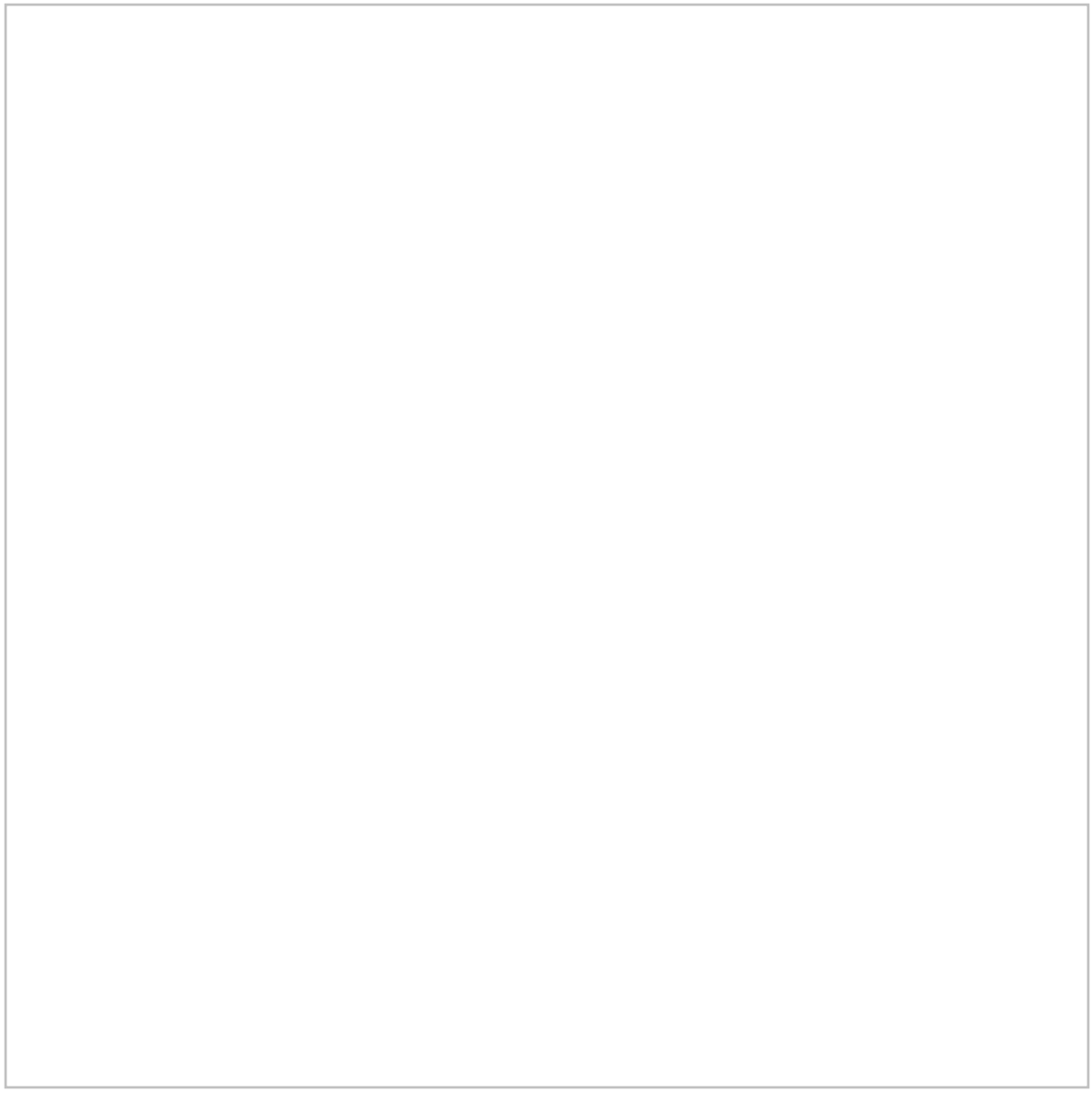
Reporter Sean Flannelly spent the last few months talking to about a dozen

residents and current and former elected officials in Framingham. You probably won't be surprised to hear that there is still some disagreement about the change. But we hope that reading about what Framingham has learned is helpful to residents and voters in Brookline who are trying to understand what it would mean for their town to become a city.

Thanks for reading.

Sam Mintz, editor

As Brookline considers becoming a city, what can it learn from Framingham?



Seven years after becoming Massachusetts' most recent town-to-city convert, Framingham officials offer a mixed verdict: yes, many believe city government is faster and more efficient, but it also brought unexpected political tensions, a rocky first mayoral term marked by public feuds, and some charter details they wish they could do over.

As Brookline weighs the same transition that would make it the state's 60th city, Framingham's experience offers cautionary tales and practical lessons about what works—and what doesn't—when a Massachusetts town decides to grow up.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Elise Couture (P2) via groups.io <elisecouture=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 12:25:34 PM

Dear Fellow Town Meeting Members,

There's little I can add that hasn't already been expressed more eloquently by others—but I do want to say how grateful I am for this community, and for our local leaders who responded swiftly and thoughtfully to the deplorable act of violence that took place this weekend.

No individual or group should ever live under threat. What happened is unacceptable.

We are living through frightening times—times that feel all too reminiscent of the years surrounding WWII. National leadership often thrives on division, false narratives, and the magnification of "otherness." But as so many of you have said, Brookline stands for something different. We value pluralism, and it is our differences that make us stronger—together.
I will gladly lend my name to any collective statement from this body denouncing acts of hate and violence in all forms.

In continued support, solidarity, and hope,

Elise (she/her), P2

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io>
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com; Brookline.News; BrooklineTMMA; sgadsby@foleyhoag.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] In-depth report: What can Brookline learn from Framingham about becoming a city?
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 12:27:22 PM

Jonathan – You are so right. The concentration of power in a city favors those who can raise more campaign and advertising dollars, is an attractant to wealthy donors, and has the potential to woefully unlevel the playing field.

Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

PS – this is not to distract from the antisemitic and cowardly attack on The Butcherie, but Jon Margolis' posting deserves thoughtful attention, even in these upsetting times.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Margolis via groups.io
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2025 12:16 PM
To: Brookline.News <newsletter@brookline.news>; BrooklineTMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; sgadsby@foleyhoag.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] In-depth report: What can Brookline learn from Framingham about becoming a city?

Slightly off-topic.

You may have seen that Mayor Wu has started running spots alleging that pro-Trump interests have given a million dollars to Josh Kraft, who is running against her. (I confess that I have not examined the ads closely--it could be that those involved have created a Super-PAC.) If true, that shows that there is very big money in the campaign in Boston. It also shows that Mayor Wu has raised a substantial amount.

Clearly, should Brookline become a city, races here would attract only a small fraction of those in Boston. Still, the amounts involved would almost certainly dwarf any that we have seen. I don't think that would be a good thing, for many reasons.

(I am not referring, here, to the anti-Wu spots that have been running for some weeks. I understand that the mayor has alleged that those are paid for by Trump allies, but they are in a different category from advertisements on the campaign itself.)

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 16, 2025 at 09:43:25 AM EDT, Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

TMMs:

While you may be hoping that the online discussion of city vs. town government may have lost some of its steam, I expect it to continue unabated until the question of a charter commission is finally resolved. For those of you who do not subscribe to Brookline News, please see the article in today's edition about the Framingham experience in converting to a city. It is very well researched and quite instructive.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby
Former Moderator's Committee member

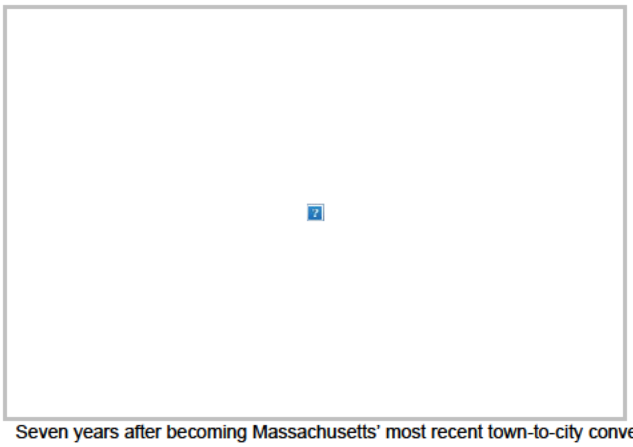
P.S. Also for those who are not a Brookline News subscriber, I strongly suggest that you become one. It is our best source of local news.

From: Brookline.News <newsletter@brookline.news>
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:02 AM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Subject: In-depth report: What can Brookline learn from Framingham about becoming a city?

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Trevvett via groups.io <David.Trevvett=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 2:03:15 PM

I'm happy that there are likely to be more wide-spread statements from TMMA and Brookline leadership. The question is how to publicize those statements, so they're seen by the community at large and not only by people connecting regularly with Town matters. Patch coverage this morning did not include statements from anyone other than Chief Paster. I'm hoping Brookline.News will do their usual good job to get the word out.

For instance, we have two visitors from Israel nearby dealing with the estate of a deceased relative. Not knowing whether they would have seen any of the statements issued by Town leaders, I sent them a personal note assuring them of the Town's condemnation of the anti-Semitic act against the Butcherie, and assuring them of our Town's support for everyone.

- David

On Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 12:25 PM Elise Couture (P2) via groups.io <elisecouture=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear Fellow Town Meeting Members,
>
> There's little I can add that hasn't already been expressed more eloquently by others—but I do want to say how grateful I am for this community, and for our local leaders who responded swiftly and thoughtfully to the deplorable act of violence that took place this weekend.
>
> No individual or group should ever live under threat. What happened is unacceptable.
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> Elise (she/her), P2

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: cthall68@comcast.net; Joslin Murphy
Cc: David S Day; Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 2:13:56 PM

When I objected to the wording included in David Day's email it seemed likely to me not to be intended as a threat. And it was not so intended. Nevertheless it seems to me a poor choice of words that may give ammunition to the haters.
John Bassett
p6

On Monday, June 16, 2025 at 10:55:54 AM EDT, Joslin Murphy <joslinmurphy16@gmail.com> wrote:

> Thank you, Carolyn. As a lawyer for more than 30 years, I am burdened by the practice of examining written and spoken language for its intent, and as a former prosecutor, I am more than familiar with language that is intended to constitute a threat. Coupled with my knowledge of my fellow TMM David Day - who in addition to other attributes is kind, thoughtful, and empathic, I read the statement as he intended. I also know John Bassett as a kind, thoughtful and empathic person, who has long supported what is good in this community. I am glad there has been an opportunity here to course correct and clarify the record. With that said, I am confident that our extraordinarily professional police department will do their best to bring those who are responsible for this abhorrent criminal act to justice. Regards, Joslin Murphy (P16)
>
> On Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 8:03 AM Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > With all due deep respect for you, John Basset, I would not read David Day's words as threatening. I found his words more fitting of this circumstance than the standard "we won't stand for it" or "hate has no place here." (Spoiler alert: hate apparently does have a place here.)
> >
> > In my experience, one of the most frustrating things about trying to educate people about antisemitism, and one of the most hurtful parts of seeing tepid responses to it, is dealing with double standards. I think David was illustrating that.
> >
> > It is important because double/different standards are part of what has allowed antisemitism to fester and grow.
> >
> > In recent years, a binary "oppressor-oppressed" narrative has become synonymous with "justice" and righteousness. This absolutist narrative leaves little room for the classic liberal (who deals in nuance), and no room for acknowledging antisemitism; because in the narrative, Israel (therefore Zionists and therefore Jews) is characterized as colonist/oppressor.
> >
> > This narrative is pervasive, including in public schools. I believe this has laid the ground for the antisemitism crisis that has reached our doorstep and crossed the threshold. Or in this case, come crashing through a Jew's window on a brick.
> >
> > I appreciate this conversation.
> >
> > Carolyn Thall
> > Pct 16

On Jun 16, 2025, at 12:35 AM, David Day via groups.io <dspencerday=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

John, Yikes! That is the exact opposite of my intent. The point of that scenario was to highlight that no one (such as the person quoted in Mr.Zelkhe's email) should pass off the violent act of throwing a brick through a window as merely "a political message". It's something I am heartened to see that we are all condemning. — David

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 7:52 PM, John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com> wrote:
>
> I share your anger at this politically motivated hate crime. But I don't like your sentence below. Writing how would you like a brick thrown through your window suggests retaliation and can be read as a threat.
> John Bassett
> p6
>
> > I wonder if the Facebook post's author would wish to have disagreement with his views, whatever they are, be expressed on a brick hurled through his living room window?
>
> On Sunday, June 15, 2025 at 01:33:43 PM EDT, David Day via groups.io <dspencerday=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I am moved by all of the comments being made on this list. I, too, am disgusted by this hateful and violent act by the perpetrators. As Sassan Zelkha notes, in moments like these, silence and moral equivocation can be misinterpreted as acceptance or even support, so it is good that we share our community's outrage at this attack on our neighbors … well, on all of us.
>
> The New York Times editorial cited by Scott Gladstone is particularly insightful on how the complexities of global politics can be a pretext to (re-)introduce anti-semitism and other forms of hate of one group towards another. In this light the Facebook post cited by Mr. Zelkha is particularly disturbing. I wonder if the Facebook post's author would wish to have disagreement with his views, whatever they are, be expressed on a brick hurled through his living room window? The very act betrays the dehumanizing motivations of the criminals.
>
> David Day
> Pct 16
>
> > On Jun 15, 2025, at 11:01 AM, Sassan Zelkha via groups.io <sassanbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has spoken out clearly and unequivocally against this hateful and antisemitic act. In moments like these, silence or moral equivocation

only serves to embolden those who traffic in hate.

There is absolutely no place in our community for antisemitism, hate, or violence—no matter the source or justification. Brookline must remain a place where all residents feel safe, respected, and protected. We cannot allow hatred to take root here.

The most disturbing comment I've seen on Facebook so far came from a Brookline resident who is not only well known in the community but also highly active in the Brookline Peace Coalition. Shockingly, instead of condemning the antisemitic act, they attempted to justify it—something that is both deeply troubling and completely unacceptable. Btw the brike broke butchery sign not the map of Israel as claimed by this individual.
<IMG_9741.jpeg>

<B76FAAAF-E102-4469-B823-7CF277BFCDA9.png>

Sassan Zelkha
Brookline Library Trustee and Precinct 14 Town Meeting Member
Pronouns: He/Him/His

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear good people of Brookline,
> My in-laws experienced Kristallnacht in Germany -- November 9,1938. They watched their synagogue burn; they listened to the breaking glass in Jewish businesses; their father was taken away to Auschwitz. While the brick that broke the glass at the Butcherie is not an act of our government, it does represent a widespread culture of hate and political violence in our country. The millions of peaceful pro-constitution patriots who marched throughout our country yesterday give me hope. We are the majority.
> Bob Weintraub
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 8:11 AM Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...
> >
> > <b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.JPG>
> > <746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.JPG>

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Beth Miller via groups.io <beth.miller.brookline122=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 2:49:13 PM

Statement from the Brookline Peace Coalition

The Brookline Peace Coalition condemns in the strongest terms the recent attack on The Butcherie, a beloved kosher market in the heart of our community. We stand against violence and hatred of any kind.

The impact of this cruel act has been to exacerbate a sense of fear and vulnerability among our Jewish friends and neighbors, including many of us. It has also further inflamed the divisions in our community. What our community needs most right now is deeper empathy and a commitment to understanding one another.

Antisemitism is real, it is dangerous, and must be confronted–just as all forms of hate must be. From the beginning, our organization has consistently rejected any conflation of Jewish religion or identity with the actions of the Israeli government. We remain steadfast in our opposition to antisemitism and we condemn those who weaponize accusations of antisemitism—whether to silence critics of the Israeli government or to target its supporters. No one should hold Jewish people, as individuals or as a community, collectively responsible for the actions of any government.

In this moment of fear and sadness, let us come together in Brookline to reaffirm our shared values: to stand against hatred of every kind, to oppose antisemitism, to condemn violence, and to ensure the safety of all in our community. As Martin Luther King taught us, “we are tied together in the single garment of destiny.”

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: David.Trevvett@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Monday, June 16, 2025 3:28:56 PM

How about when the TMMA has it all together, with all the individual emails and words of support, have the TMMA send it to the Globe and the Herald and the several TV stations.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 16, 2025, at 2:02 PM, David Trevvett via groups.io <David.Trevvett=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I'm happy that there are likely to be more wide-spread statements from TMMA and Brookline leadership. The question is how to publicize those statements, so they're seen by the community at large and not only by people connecting regularly with Town matters. Patch coverage this morning did not include statements from anyone other than Chief Paster. I'm hoping Brookline.News will do their usual good job to get the word out.
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> For instance, we have two visitors from Israel nearby dealing with the estate of a deceased relative. Not knowing whether they would have seen any of the statements issued by Town leaders, I sent them a personal note assuring them of the Town's condemnation of the anti-Semitic act against the Butcherie, and assuring them of our Town's support for everyone.
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> On Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 12:25 PM Elise Couture (P2) via groups.io <elisecouture=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
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> > There's little I can add that hasn't already been expressed more eloquently by others—but I do want to say how grateful I am for this community, and for our local leaders who responded swiftly and thoughtfully to the deplorable act of violence that took place this weekend.
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Patricia Maher via groups.io <patmaherTMM7=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 6:59:59 AM

Dear TMMs,

I am adding my voice to express sadness about the destructive act against the Butcherie this weekend. As many have said, it is essential to speak out strongly against hate, violence and antisemitism. I uplift Marissa's suggestion that Town Meeting send out a collective statement to do this as a beginning step. It is also important to take action. I hope that the next steps involve coming together to support the Butcherie, building relationships and understanding where they don't exist, teaching our children by example how to respond to violence and working tirelessly to create a community where everyone is safe and valued.

Pat Maher
TMM p7

On Mon, Jun 16, 2025 at 3:28 PM Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> How about when the TMMA has it all together, with all the individual emails and words of support, have the TMMA send it to the Globe and the Herald and the several TV stations.
>
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> Town Meeting Member
> Precinct 13
> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Ariel Gruzman via groups.io <agruzman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 10:16:27 AM

Dear Beth,

Even in your group's antisemitism condemnation you couldn't help but slip in the line about it being "weaponized." Shocking.

Ariel Gruzman

TMM5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Benny Garfinkel via groups.io <bpgarfinkel=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: agruzman@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 11:06:33 AM
Attachments: Opinion This Israeli Government Is a Danger to Jews Everywhere - The New York Times.pdf

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Dear Beth,
Thank you for your message of hope and peace.
Ariel, are you really going to argue that there is no weaponization of anti-semitism? That the current administration isn't using us as an excuse to target Academic institutions? That the current government in Israel isn't using us as shields against criticism? Since we're all sharing NYT editorials, I recommend the attached by Thomas Friedman.
Beth's message is that this use of antisemitism makes it cheap, it makes it worse.
I wish we could acknowledge that the situation is complex, that antisemitism is very real and dangerous AND that anger at current events in Gaza can inflame it. That is NOT a justification. It is a sad observation of the current reality.
Benny Garfinkel TMM 11.

On Tue, Jun 17, 2025 at 10:16 AM Ariel Gruzman via groups.io <agruzman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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>
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> Ariel Gruzman
>
> TMM5

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The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/10/opinion/israel-gaza-anti-semitism.html

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

This Israeli Government Is a Danger to Jews Everywhere

June 10, 2025

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By Thomas L. Friedman
Opinion Columnist

Israelis, diaspora Jewry and friends of Israel everywhere need to understand that the way Israel is fighting the war in Gaza today is laying the groundwork for a fundamental recasting of how Israel and Jews will be seen the world over.

It won't be good. Police cars and private security at synagogues and Jewish institutions will increasingly become the norm; Israel, instead of being seen by Jews as a safe haven from antisemitism, will be seen as a new engine generating it; sane Israelis will line up to immigrate to Australia and America rather than beckon their fellow Jews to come Israel's way. That dystopian future is not here yet, but if you don't see its outlines gathering, you are deluding yourself.

Fortunately, more and more retired and reserve duty Israeli Air Force pilots, as well as retired Army and security officers, are seeing this gathering storm and declaring they will not be silent or complicit in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu's ugly, nihilistic policy in Gaza. They have begun to urge Jews in America and elsewhere to speak up — SOS: Save Our Ship — before the widening moral stain of Israel's military campaign in Gaza becomes irreversible.

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First, the back story: Israel months ago destroyed Hamas as an existential military threat. Given that, the Netanyahu government should be telling the Trump administration and Arab mediators that it's ready to withdraw from Gaza in a phased manner and be replaced by an international/Arab/Palestinian Authority peacekeeping force — provided that the Hamas leadership agrees to return all remaining living and dead hostages and leave the strip.

If instead, though, Israel goes ahead with Netanyahu's vow to perpetuate this war indefinitely — to try to achieve "total victory" over every last Hamasnik, along with the far right's fantasy of ridding Gaza of Palestinians and resettling it with Israelis — Jews worldwide better prepare themselves, their children and their grandchildren for a reality they've never known: to be Jewish in a world where the Jewish state is a pariah state — a source of shame, not of pride.

Because one day, foreign photographers and reporters will be allowed to go into Gaza unescorted by the Israeli Army. And when they do, and the full horror of the destruction there becomes clear to all, the backlash against Israel and Jews everywhere could be profound.

Do not confuse my warning to Israel for a shred of understanding for what Hamas did on Oct. 7, 2023. Hamas invited the Israeli response with its own mass killings of Israeli parents in front of their children, children in front of their parents, by kidnapping grandmothers and murdering kidnapped children. What society in the

world would not see its heart grow cold by such brutality? Hamas deserves to be eliminated; Hamas is and always has been a cancer on the Palestinian people, let alone Israelis.

But as a Jew who believes in the right of the Jewish people to live in a secure state in their biblical homeland — alongside a secure Palestinian state — I am focused right now on my own tribe. And if my own tribe does not resist this Israeli government's utter indifference to the number of civilians being killed in Gaza today — as well its attempt to tilt Israel into authoritarianism at home by moving to sack its independent attorney general — Jews everywhere will pay dearly.

Don't just take that warning from me. Last week two respected former Israeli Air Force pilots, Brig. Gen. Asaf Agmon and Col. Uri Arad (who was a P.O.W. in Egypt during the October 1973 war), published an open letter in Hebrew in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, addressed to their colleagues still serving in the Air Force. Both men are members of Forum 555 Patriots, an impressive group of around 1,700 Israeli Air Force pilots, some retired and some still serving as reservists, which originally formed to resist Netanyahu's efforts to undermine Israeli democracy with a judicial coup.

A Forum 555 leader, the retired Israeli Air Force helicopter pilot Guy Poran, sent me Agmon and Arad's letter to see if I could get it published as a Times Opinion guest essay. I told them I wanted to publish an excerpt myself. They wrote:

We do not seek to downplay the monstrous nature of the massacre committed by Hamas terrorists on that cursed Saturday. We believe the war was fully justified. …

However, as the war in Gaza dragged on, it became clear that it was losing its strategic and security purposes and instead served primarily the political and personal interests of the government. It thus became an unmistakably immoral war, and increasingly appeared to be a war of revenge. …

The Air Force has become a tool for those, in government and even in the military, who claim that there are no innocent people in Gaza. … Recently, a member of the Knesset even boasted that one of the government's achievements is the ability to kill 100 people a day in Gaza without anyone being shocked.

In response to such statements, we say: As horrific as the Oct. 7 massacre was, it does not justify complete disregard for moral considerations or the disproportionate use of deadly force. We do not want to become like the worst of our enemies.

The climax came on the night of March 18, with the resumption of war after the Israeli government knowingly chose to violate the agreement for the return of hostages. In a deadly airstrike intended to kill several Hamas commanders (reports vary on whether there were dozens or fewer), a new record was set. The munitions dropped by Air Force pilots on the target killed approximately 300 people, including many children. No satisfactory explanation has been given so far for the horrifying outcome of the attack.

Since then, the Air Force has continued its relentless strikes on Gaza. … Entire buildings with children, women, and civilians are bombed ostensibly to eliminate terrorists or destroy terror infrastructure. Even if some targets are legitimate, the disproportionate harm to uninvolved civilians cannot be denied. …

This is a moment of reckoning. It is not too late. We call on our fellow active duty pilots: Do not continue to avoid asking questions. … Because you are the ones who will have to bear the moral consequences of your actions for the rest of your

> lives. You will have to face your children and grandchildren and explain how such unimaginable destruction occurred in Gaza, how so many innocent children perished by the deadly killing machine you piloted.

Just a few hours after I got the letter, Nimrod Novik, a senior foreign policy adviser to former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, sent me another open letter, dated June 8. This one was from Commanders for Israel's Security, urging Jewish diaspora voices to speak up against the madness in Gaza before they too are consumed by it. It read, in part:

> As Commanders for Israel's Security, a movement of over 550 retired senior officials from Israel's defense, security and diplomatic services, our lifelong mission has been to secure the future of Israel as the strong, democratic home of the Jewish people. … Recent events have led to passionate and sometimes painful debates within Jewish communities worldwide, particularly regarding the situation in Gaza. Many in the diaspora have voiced concerns publicly. Consequently, some have faced harsh criticism. Accused of weakening Israel or betraying their connection to the Jewish state, they are told that those who live abroad or do not serve in the I.D.F. must keep silent. We categorically reject the notion that Jews in the diaspora must remain silent on matters concerning Israel. … To those who fear that public criticism undermines Israel, we say that open, honest dialogue only reinforces our democracy and our security.

I have three reactions to these open letters:

First, Amen.

Second, this is what being pro-Israel really sounds like.

Third, it is time for a similar movement calling out Hamas's vile excesses, led by those who support Palestinian statehood and a peaceful resolution in Gaza. No one should accept Hamas prolonging this war to keep itself in power. Nothing would do more to pressure Hamas to accept a cease-fire than to be denounced across the world, on college campuses and in high-profile demonstrations from those who have been giving this hate-driven organization a free pass. This is what being pro-Palestinian really sounds like.

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email: letters@nytimes.com.

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Thomas L. Friedman is the foreign affairs Opinion columnist. He joined the paper in 1981 and has won three Pulitzer Prizes. He is the author of seven books, including "From Beirut to Jerusalem," which won the National Book Award. @tomfriedman • Facebook

---

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 22 of the New York edition with the headline: Israel's Government Is a Danger to Jews Everywhere

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Cathleen Cavell via groups.io <cathleencavell=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bpgarfinkel@gmail.com
Cc: agruzman@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 11:21:51 AM

I add my thanks to Beth and Benny--as well as to Thomas Friedman for his welcome op ed.
Cathleen Cavell
TMM-1

On Tue, Jun 17, 2025 at 11:06 AM Benny Garfinkel via groups.io <bpgarfinkel=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear Beth,
> Thank you for your message of hope and peace.
> Ariel, are you really going to argue that there is no weaponization of anti-semitism? That the current administration isn't using us as an excuse to target Academic institutions? That the current government in Israel isn't using us as shields against criticism? Since we're all sharing NYT editorials, I recommend the attached by Thomas Friedman.
> Beth's message is that this use of antisemitism makes it cheap, it makes it worse.
> I wish we could acknowledge that the situation is complex, that antisemitism is very real and dangerous AND that anger at current events in Gaza can inflame it. That is NOT a justification. It is a sad observation of the current reality.
> Benny Garfinkel TMM 11.
>
> On Tue, Jun 17, 2025 at 10:16 AM Ariel Gruzman via groups.io <agruzman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
>> Dear Beth,
>>
>> Even in your group's antisemitism condemnation you couldn't help but slip in the line about it being "weaponized." Shocking.
>>
>> Ariel Gruzman
>>
>> TMM5

--
Cathleen Cavell
cathleencavell@gmail.com
617-733-1492 mobile

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bpgarfinkel@gmail.com
Cc: agruzman@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 11:23:24 AM

Thank you Benny. I had tried the stay out of this debate, but I want to give a thumbs up to your response. Antisemitism is real, and dangerous, even here in Brookline, and has the potential to be deadly, as we are seeing elsewhere. AND, the weaponization of antisemitism, by the Trump administration and others, is a sad reality as you point out, and also dangerous.

If we are ever going to get along, we all need to find ways to hold the complexity of multiple truths that often seem contradictory.

Beth, as someone who has disagreed with some of your posts in the past, I want to thank you for your thoughtful post and your empathy in this difficult moment. We can all agree on the wish for peace, even as we disagree, respectfully, about the best way to achieve it.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 17, 2025, at 11:06 AM, Benny Garfinkel via groups.io <bpgarfinkel=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Dear Beth,
> Thank you for your message of hope and peace.
> Ariel, are you really going to argue that there is no weaponization of anti-semitism? That the current administration isn't using us as an excuse to target Academic institutions? That the current government in Israel isn't using us as shields against criticism? Since we're all sharing NYT editorials, I recommend the attached by Thomas Friedman.
> Beth's message is that this use of antisemitism makes it cheap, it makes it worse. I wish we could acknowledge that the situation is complex, that antisemitism is very real and dangerous AND that anger at current events in Gaza can inflame it. That is NOT a justification. It is a sad observation of the current reality.
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> On Tue, Jun 17, 2025 at 10:16 AM Ariel Gruzman via groups.io <agruzman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Dear Beth,
> >
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> >
> > Ariel Gruzman
> >
> > TMM5

<Opinion _ This Israeli Government Is a Danger to Jews Everywhere - The New York Times.pdf>

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Ariel Gruzman via groups.io <agruzman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 12:23:14 PM

Is antisemitism sometimes “weaponized”? Of course, just like "criticism" of the Israeli government is often weaponized as a cover for antisemitic views. It’s the other side of the same coin. But that is exactly my point. What does any of that have to do with the brick that smashed the butchery window? When there’s a hate crime, condemn it. Period. Spare us the mental gymnastics about “weaponization” or whatever political context you’re clinging to. Would you have sent Gili, the owner of the Butchery, Thomas Friedman Op-Ed to explain him why he and his business were a target of a hate crime or just condemn it and show him empathy?

Ariel Gruzman

TMM5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] School Committee statement re: Butcherie incident
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 12:42:18 PM

The weekly School Committee newsletter contains a statement about the Butcherie incident. Please see below.

You can find School Committee newsletters here and click here to opt in.

Carolyn Thall
Pct 16

Specia
fromtheSchoolCommittee

A deeply troubling antisemitic incident occurred in our community over the weekend. Early Sunday morning, a brick bearing the message "Free Palestine" was thrown through the window of a Brookline Jewish-owned kosher grocery store.

While this act did not take place on school grounds, we recognize the deep impact on members of our school community. The store is owned and operated by a PSB family, and this violent act is hauntingly reminiscent of Kristallnacht, the deadly 1938 pogrom against Jews.

We are committed to supporting our Jewish and Israeli students, families, staff and the broader Brookline community in the face of this violent, antisemitic attack, and acknowledging, understanding, and addressing antisemitism in our schools and community. Hateful and violent acts against our Jewish community must not be tolerated.

The **Brookline Police Department** is actively investigating this incident as a hate crime. Anyone who may have information can reach out to the BPD at 617-730-2711 or 617-730-2222.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Katherine Florio via groups.io <kcfloriobrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 4:04:05 PM

Thank you Chair Greene, members of the Select Board, and to everyone who has spoken up with care and seriousness.

I want to add this thought, in the hope it helps keep us focused on what we share.

A hate crime is never only against one person, or one group. It is meant to divide all of us—to mark some as lesser, and to make the rest complicit by silence or indifference. Condemning it is necessary. But our real work is to ensure that hate finds no comfort here, no place to hide, and no audience to listen.

Brookline is strongest when we see this not as an attack on some of us, but on all of us.

Katherine Florio
Precinct 10

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: baswolfe@aol.com
Subject: [brooklinetmma] The Brookline Neighborhood Alliance annual meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 4:18:00 PM

The Brookline Neighborhood Alliance annual meeting was last night. The Board and officers were re-elected except for Lee Cooke-Childs who has retired as Treasurer. Dan Saltzman agreed to serve as Acting Treasurer. Most of the meeting was presenting three Neighborhood Leadership awards:

- The Griggs Park Neighborhood Association. This is an active and very positive neighborhood association. It has guided the Town maintenance and renovation of Griggs Park. And it has creatively organized outdoor activities including music to bring neighbors together in spite of covid restrictions.
- Rachel Silverman and Thrifty Threads for working to cultivate community, promote sustainability, and foster supportive connections within Brookline and beyond. Thrifty Threads is in the United Parish Church at 210 Harvard St. https://www.unitedparishbrookline.org/get-involved/outreach- social-justice/thrifty-threads/ The volume of used clothes and other things redistributed is impressive.
- Arthur Conquest for his long-standing and tireless work and advocacy on behalf of Brookline Adult and Community Education. It was good to hear from the Director of Brookline Adult and Community Education what Arthur has contributed. Arthur spoke well. And his family including his two granddaughters was there.
- And Special BNA Service Awards to Lee Cooke-Childs and John Bassett. Lee has served as Board Member and Treasurer for many years and has earned the title Board Member Emerita.

It was so nice to have a meeting that was almost all positive. The hate crime against the Butcherie was noted. But good things have happened and are happening. And there are good people including the Brookline Neighborhood Alliance Board.

John Bassett
p6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io; kcfloriobrookline@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 4:43:35 PM

Thank you, Katherine.

Hate has no home here. At least, I hope it does not.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at 04:04:05 PM EDT, Katherine Florio via groups.io <kcfloriobrookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Thank you Chair Greene, members of the Select Board, and to everyone who has spoken up with care and seriousness.

I want to add this thought, in the hope it helps keep us focused on what we share.

A hate crime is never only against one person, or one group. It is meant to divide all of us—to mark some as lesser, and to make the rest complicit by silence or indifference. Condemning it is necessary. But our real work is to ensure that hate finds no comfort here, no place to hide, and no audience to listen.

Brookline is strongest when we see this not as an attack on some of us, but on all of us.

Katherine Florio
Precinct 10

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To:	BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAXmembers
Cc:	"R Blood"; ": Emily DeHoog"; lee@acrossb.com; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; freedgur@aol.com; suehow@aol.com; joseph.p.katz@gmail.com; sbkitterman@gmail.com; mandastein17@gmail.com; "Christopher Mutty"; garyadamshiffman@gmail.com; hsimansky@gmail.com; gtuckman@hotmail.com; jvanderkay@gmail.com; bobw9090@gmail.com
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] 16 Williams St] Proposed sale of Special Needs affordable housing property
Date:	Tuesday, June 17, 2025 6:09:50 PM
Attachments:	16 Williams St - Google Maps.pdf
Importance:	High

To all Brookliners who appreciate the subtle, complex, and very important difference between (A)(1) being pro-*affordable/inclusive*-housing and also (2) maintaining the character of neighborhoods, VS. (B) being "simply" pro-housing, even for luxury-yuppie units that may harm neighborhoods**…:**

… As per Roger Blood's below email (to TMM-9's), ***please tune in to tomorrow***'s HAB meeting re **16 Williams St**. (ATTACHD), between Centre & Harvard. It's yet another North Brookline property where our pretty unique market prioritizes (exclusive) luxury-yuppie units, here losing specifically/both special needs units, and more generally a deed-restriction mandating some affordable housing. To **r**egister in advance, click https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItdO-orTwqE4tv9zFrY24M5wzdBh52DQs

Roger tells me the S-Bd. will next week discuss (in executive session) this challenging and time-sensitive issue, which I'm very happy to hear. I & I'm sure others urge them -- our Town's "Leaders" (PS, denigrated as "The Kiddie Table" by City proponents, I can't resist adding) -- to try mobilizing to *find a buyer* who furthers our "consensus" housing priorities.

Yes, this isolated 10-room property may not (per Bogart in Casablanca) "amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world"; but IMHO it seems "one small step for … for [Brookline's hu]mankind." (sorta Neil Armstrong)

PPS, all (as usual) editorial ramblings herein are only mine, not by **Roger**, who PPPS is a decades-long, much appreciated, hard-working, and hugely knowledgeable advocate for (post rent-control) *affordable/inclusive*-housing.

Marty Rosenthal
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."* attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGES (emphases now added)

From: R Blood <rfblood@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2025 12:31 PM

To: lee@acrossb.com; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; freedgur@aol.com; suehow@aol.com; joseph.p.katz@gmail.com; sbkitterman@gmail.com; mandastein17@gmail.com; Christopher Mutty <muttychristopher@gmail.com>; martyros@world.std.com; garyadamshiffman@gmail.com; hsimansky@gmail.com; gtuckman@hotmail.com; jvanderkay@gmail.com; bobw9090@gmail.com
Subject: Proposed sale of Special Needs affordable housing property at 16 Williams Street

Dear Precinct Nine Town Meeting Members:

As Chair of the Housing Advisory Board, I want to give you an advance heads-up about an agenda item at the HAB's upcoming public meeting (via Zoom) next Wednesday June 18th beginning at 5:30pm. HAB members will be discussing the proposed sale of a property located at 16 Williams Street. The property's current owner is the Price Rehabilitation Center, which has operated its Williams Street building for many years as a 10-room lodging house serving special needs tenants. This older three-level residence, most of whose rooms are accessible only by stairways, has become increasingly challenging for its aging residents. After unsuccessfully seeking to acquire a more fully accessible property here in Brookline, the Price Center has decided to acquire a property in Needham that meets the needs of its Williams Street residents.

In 2010, the Town awarded $192,000 in CDBG funds to help Price do some needed upgrades at Williams Street at which time we secured a 30-year income-restricted covenant on the property. In the event of a proposed sale, the covenant includes a Right-of-First Refusal, as well as repayment of the Town's CDBG funding.

In notifying the Town of its intent to sell 16 Williams Street, Price has provided a $3 million Offer to Purchase letter from a private developer. If the Town wants to exercise its Right of First Refusal, it will have 90 days from June 3rd to identify and secure a commitment from a qualified affordable housing sponsor to acquire and deed-restrict this existing lodging house. This is the situation that the HAB will be considering this situation at its meeting next Wednesday.

You are, of course, welcome to join this Zoom meeting via the Town's website. If you have any questions prior to the meeting, please feel free to email me, w/cc to Senior Housing Planner Emily DeHoog at edehoog@brooklinema.gov.

Roger Blood
HAB Chair

617-512-2004 (talk, text)

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Google Maps

16 Williams St

10 rooms, special needs



Image capture: Oct 2022 © 2025 Google



From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jeff Rudolph via groups.io <jeff.rudolph=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Question regarding updates to brookline alert system
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 8:44:32 PM

Hi all, I have been trying to figure out if the new brookline alert system still has granularity for alerts such as field closures, the release of the Town administrators newsletter, etc. It seems to only have three options now (emergency, elections, town events.) maybe I'm just missing something? I find the alerts super helpful.

Thanks,
Jeff Rudolph
P6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Liz Linder via groups.io <liz=lizlinder.com@groups.io>
To: jeff.rudolph@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Question regarding updates to brookline alert system
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 12:29:15 AM

Thanks Jeff,

I also find the alerts helpful… and wondering if others are encountering similar issues - including the alerts to sign up for the updated alert system ... but the sign-up process is unconvincing (meaning, I have no idea if I'm signed up now or not?!). And the 'reply-to query bounced back.

Any insight into who to reach out to would be great, thanks!

LL

-

Liz Linder
Photography, Inc.
cell/ 617-818-6537
studio/ 617-232-3202
••••••••••••••••••••••••••
web • www.lizlinder.com
IG • @lizlinderphotography

> On Jun 17, 2025, at 8:44 PM, Jeff Rudolph via groups.io <jeff.rudolph=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi all, I have been trying to figure out if the new brookline alert system still has granularity for alerts such as field closures, the release of the Town administrators newsletter, etc. It seems to only have three options now (emergency, elections, town events.) maybe I'm just missing something? I find the alerts super helpful.
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> Jeff Rudolph
> P6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Trevvett via groups.io <David.Trevvett=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: liz@lizlinder.com
Cc: jeff.rudolph@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Question regarding updates to brookline alert system
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 12:33:48 AM

I just signed up and received both email and text "Thanks for joining AlertBrookline" msgs [I had selected both as alert options.)

- David Trevvett, TMM P2

On Wed, Jun 18, 2025 at 12:29 AM Liz Linder via groups.io <liz=lizlinder.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Thanks Jeff,
>
> I also find the alerts helpful… and wondering if others are encountering similar issues - including the alerts to sign up for the updated alert system ... but the sign-up process is unconvincing (meaning, I have no idea if I'm signed up now or not?!). And the 'reply-to query bounced back.
>
> Any insight into who to reach out to would be great, thanks!
>
> LL
>
> -
>
> Liz Linder
> Photography, Inc.
> cell/ 617-818-6537
> studio/ 617-232-3202
> ••••••••••••••••••••••••••
> web • www.lizlinder.com
> IG • @lizlinderphotography
>
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> > Thanks,
> > Jeff Rudolph
> > P6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jeff Rudolph via groups.io <jeff.rudolph=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Question regarding updates to brookline alert system
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 8:17:10 AM

I did receive the sign up texts - thanks David. Liz if you haven't then it seems you might have to try again - https://www.brooklinema.gov/2375/Be-Informed---Alert-Brookline. I had to switch to "desktop mode" or something similar (full page mode?) on my phone to fill in the whole form. on a computer browser I see its a little easier.

I'm going to mail **AlertBrookline@BrooklineMA.gov** regarding the topic granularity (ie. field alerts, etc.). Will post back here what I find!

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Eileen Berger via groups.io <eileenberger33=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Butcherie response
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 8:47:34 AM

---

message on the 16th did not go through
From: Eileen Berger <eileenberger33@gmail.com>
To: anthonybuono728@gmail.com, BrooklineTMMA <Brooklinetmma@googlegroups.com>
Cc:
Bcc:
Date: Mon, 16 Jun 2025 17:06:39 -0400
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight

Friends,
It is so disheartening to know that this incident should happen in Brookline to our neighbors and merchants.It is deplorable and frightening. I was especially moved by Bob Weintrab who wrote of his in-law's experience on Kristallnacht in 1938 Nazi Germany. Many years ago I was part of the teacher training Institute from Facing History and Ourselves (a valuable program that was dropped by the PSB) learning about bias,trauma and hate that even everyday Germans accepted and participated in. Thank goodness we are speaking out against this clearly hateful intentional act in Brookline.
Eileen Berger p15

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM; eileenberger33@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Butcherie response
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 9:01:04 AM

Thanks for reminding us about "Facing History and Ourselves"! This was such a good program. I remember our kids accusing us of stereotyping. They were right. I think this is still needed and hope it can be restored. It started here.
John Bassett
p6

On Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 08:47:34 AM EDT, Eileen Berger via groups.io <eileenberger33=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> message on the 16th did not go through
> From: Eileen Berger <eileenberger33@gmail.com>
> To: anthonybuono728@gmail.com, BrooklineTMMA <Brooklinetmma@googlegroups.com>
> Cc:
> Bcc:
> Date: Mon, 16 Jun 2025 17:06:39 -0400
> Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
>
> Friends,
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> Eileen Berger p15

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Susan Park via groups.io <susanforbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io; kcfloriobrookline@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] The Butcherie
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 9:21:04 AM

Thank you Katherine and Jon.
Very insightful. Hate is insidious and love, unity, and supporting each other now is critical. Hate has no home in Brookline. Let's continue to come together and speak up when we see hate knocking on Brookline's door. We as leaders of our town can continue to lead with empathy and kindness.

Also I want to congratulate the School Committee on a unanimous YES on selecting the next Interim Superintendent Bella Wong so swiftly to bring stability, trust, mastery, and excellence back to Brookline schools as well as balancing the budget. Great to see Brookline's own at the helm.

Susan Park
TMM17

On Tue, 17 Jun 2025 at 4:43 PM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Thank you, Katherine.
>
> Hate has no home here. At least, I hope it does not.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
>
> On Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at 04:04:05 PM EDT, Katherine Florio via groups.io <kcfloriobrookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Thank you Chair Greene, members of the Select Board, and to everyone who has spoken up with care and seriousness.
>
> I want to add this thought, in the hope it helps keep us focused on what we share.
>
> A hate crime is never only against one person, or one group. It is meant to divide all of us—to mark some as lesser, and to make the rest complicit by silence or indifference. Condemning it is necessary. But our real work is to ensure that hate finds no comfort here, no place to hide, and no audience to listen.
>
> Brookline is strongest when we see this not as an attack on some of us, but on all of us.
>
> Katherine Florio

> Precinct 10

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Rebecca Stone via groups.io <stonewalt=mac.com@groups.io>
To: jeff.rudolph@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io; ccarey@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Question regarding updates to brookline alert system
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 9:39:13 AM

I believe the Alert system and the NotifyMe system are separate. Chas's newsletter and meeting notices are on Notify, whereas alerts are for time-sensitive impact alerts such as weather-related changes, health and safety, etc. are in the Alerts system. I hope maybe Chas will clarify/confirm that.

And I join Jeff and Liz in recommending desk-top for the Alert re-subscribing. Straightforward and I received a confirmation email.

Rebecca Stone
TMM3

(from my phone, so the usual apologies apply)
Join the Brookline charter conversation: www.brooklinecitycharter.com

> On Jun 17, 2025, at 8:44 PM, Jeff Rudolph via groups.io <jeff.rudolph=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi all, I have been trying to figure out if the new brookline alert system still has granularity for alerts such as field closures, the release of the Town administrators newsletter, etc. It seems to only have three options now (emergency, elections, town events.) maybe I'm just missing something? I find the alerts super helpful.
>
> Thanks,
> Jeff Rudolph
> P6

Groups.io Links:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jesse Hefter via groups.io <jesse.hefter=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 12:33:18 PM

Dear TMMs:

It is important in this conversation that we are crystal clear about what antisemitism is. Antisemitism (or Judeophobia/Jew Hatred) is defined as hostility or discrimination against Jewish people. It is true that there are other Semitic peoples, but it is not true that hostility or discrimination towards Arabs can be described as antisemitism.

The word antisemitism, coined in the 19th century by German antisemite Friedrich Wilhelm Adolph Marr, is not a statement about the Semites; it is a statement about Jews as an ethnicity. This means that wherever Jews live and whatever nationality they are, antisemitism applies to hate, discrimination, and terror visited upon them by others.

We can all agree that hatred of others has terrifying consequences. We can also agree that, to the extent possible, we all believe that people can coexist peacefully. However, the incontrovertible fact is that antisemitism is defined as hatred against Jews.

Respectully,

Jesse

--
Jesse Hefter
TMM 14

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io>
To: listserv TMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date: Wednesday, June 18, 2025 4:44:28 PM

Colleagues – If you haven't yet seen it, I recommend the following public health report from WCVB.

https://www.wcvb.com/article/cannabis-crisis-psychosis-and-addiction-impacting-massachusetts-teens-and-young-adults/65080266

Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

Groups.io Links:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Arthur Conquest via groups.io <awcIII=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM; Brookline PAX
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Juneteenth"s History
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2025 12:57:29 AM

Juneteenth's History

On 19th June 1865, over 250,000 Black slaves in Galveston, TX received conformation of their emancipation, reaching a seminal date and achievement in this nation's history. It commemorated the birth of Black Independence Day, a celebration embraced by Black people throughout America.

Following the War Between the States, Juneteenth celebrations emerged as a tradition among formerly enslaved individuals and their families. These celebrations first took place in Texas but spread to other states where Black communities existed. Activities during these celebrations included religious services, storytelling, singing, games and food fests. One tradition included the symbolic act of discarding garments worn during enslavement into a river, representing a visual separation from human bondage.

Recognizing Juneteenth as a federal holiday gives Americans an opportunity to contemplate the complicated processes of emancipation that took place after President Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation on 22 September 1862. Juneteenth marks the day (19 June 1865) when Union Army General, Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, TX, and demanded the state's enslaved population be liberated. To communicate this demand, Granger read aloud General Order No. 3:

"The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages."

It wasn't until General Granger swept through other parts of the South from 1863 to 1864 that news of Lincoln's Proclamation spread—and Black slaves were able to celebrate freedom. Only the action of Congress to pass the 13th Amendment and the ratification by the necessary number of states on 6 December 1865, officially abolished slavery in every state, not just the confederacy.

Juneteenth is about building historical awareness and self-education. It was only a year after the events at Galveston that former slaves and their families gathered and celebrated their freedom. This tradition, which started in Texas, spread to Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Florida, and California.

These festivities involved religious services, oral story-telling events, singing, and games, often centered around feasting at barbeques and picnics. Another common tradition involved dressing up. Historically, then, Juneteenth is a holiday for formerly enslaved Blacks and their descendants to celebrate their freedom through acts of symbolic resistance against American white supremacy.

The effort to make Juneteenth a federal holiday is only recent however. Juneteenth fests were revived during Reconstruction II and the Civil Rights rebellion of the 1960s. And it was only when U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) pushed for federal recognition during Reconstruction III, the height of the Black Lives Matter protests, when the nationwide celebrations ignited.

While Juneteenth doesn't eliminate structural racism in America, recognizing it as a federal holiday is a crucial step towards bringing the rich history of Blacks into the center of both our history and identity.

Truth/Justice,
Arthur Wellington Conquest III, P6

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynn-Jones, Sean via groups.io <Sean_Lynn-Jones=hks.harvard.edu@groups.io>
To:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] Urban Forest Manager Announcement - Welcome Jack Schleifer/BGSA Solstice Celebration
Date:	Thursday, June 19, 2025 8:31:13 AM
Attachments:	image001.png image003.png image004.png

Dear Town Meeting Colleagues,

I am writing to let you know that the Town of Brookline has hired an outstanding successor to Tom Brady, who ably served as tree warden and town arborist for many years before departing in January to become director of public works in Watertown.

In the midst of all the recent emails about disturbing contemporary events that demand attention (antisemitic vandalism) and deeply meaningful historical events that call for celebration and reflection (today is Juneteenth), Erin Chute's announcement (below) that Jack Schleifer has been hired as urban forest manager may have been overlooked.

I am delighted to welcome Jack Schleifer to Brookline. We are very fortunate that he will be joining the Town's Parks and Open Space Division. I have gotten to know Jack during many interactions between the Emerald Necklace Conservancy and the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance. We also both serve on the Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee for the Muddy River Restoration Project.

Jack is passionate about trees and parks, he has much knowledge and experience, and he already knows a lot about Brookline and its green spaces. He will be a leader in protecting trees, engaging the public, and advancing our climate resiliency and sustainability goals. We should all look forward to working with Jack as he assumes responsibility for Brookline's thousands of public trees.

Also note that all Town Meeting members are invited to the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance's celebration of the Summer Solstice on Friday, June 20, 7:00–8:30 p.m., in Fisher Hill Reservoir Park. There will be refreshments, a guided walk, and an a cappella concert as the sun sets on the longest day of the year. If you plan to attend, please let us know: info@brooklinegreenspace.org

Best,
Sean Lynn-Jones
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1
President, Brookline GreenSpace Alliance

From: Erin Chute <echute@brooklinema.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2025 11:40 AM
To: Erin Chute <echute@brooklinema.gov>
Subject: Urban Forest Manager Announcement - Welcome Jack Schleifer

The Town of Brookline Welcomes Jack Schleifer as New Urban Forest Manager

The Department of Public Works is thrilled to announce that Jack Schleifer will be joining the Town of Brookline, DPW-Parks and Open Space Division, as our new Urban Forest Manager. Jack was selected following a competitive search that attracted talented candidates from across the region. The hiring committee—comprised of staff and representatives from the GreenSpace Alliance and Tree Planting Committee—was especially impressed by Jack's deep commitment to urban forestry, collaborative spirit, educational background, and exceptional communication skills.

This vital position focuses on stewarding Brookline's public tree canopy, fostering partnerships across Town departments and community groups, and advancing strategic goals related to tree planting, maintenance, and climate resiliency. The position also plays a key role in engaging residents, educating the public, and building support for the long-term health and vitality of our urban forest.

Jack most recently served as Field Operations Manager at the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, where he led the organization's urban forestry program, including the acclaimed Olmsted Tree Society initiative. In this role, he worked closely with the City of Boston, Town of Brookline, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to raise funds and oversee tree planting, tree health management, and maintenance throughout the historic Emerald Necklace park system. He oversaw contractor operations and supported grant writing initiatives to fund long-term urban forestry investments.

Jack brings experience in both municipal and nonprofit forestry. He previously worked with the Urban Resources Initiative in New Haven as a Community Forester, engaging directly with residents to plant and care for neighborhood trees, and before that, as a Consulting Utility Forester with Davey Resource Group, where he supported large-scale vegetation management and tree risk assessments.

Jack holds a Master's degree from the Yale School of the Environment, with a focus on Ecosystem Management, Conservation, and Urban Forestry. He is passionate about strengthening urban tree canopy through science-based practice, inclusive public engagement, and long-term planning.

Jack will be starting with the Town on July 14, 2025. Please join us in warmly welcoming Jack to Brookline. We are excited for the expertise, energy, and collaborative leadership he brings to this important role.

Sincerely,

Erin

Erin E. Chute | She - Hers
Commissioner of Public Works
Town of Brookline
333 Washington St., Brookline, MA 02445
(o) 617-730-2166
echute@brooklinema.gov | www.brooklinema.gov

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Erin E. Chute| She - Hers
Commissioner of Public Works
Town of Brookline
333 Washington St., Brookline, MA 02445
(o) 617-730-2166
echute@brooklinema.gov | www.brooklinema.gov



From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jeff Rudolph via groups.io <jeff.rudolph=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Question regarding updates to brookline alert system
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2025 1:20:31 PM

Thank you so much Rebecca! You are totally right, it appears i was conflating the two systems (alerts & notifyme), or perhaps something changed and they used to be one and now they are two, or who knows :) I went to "notifyme" and I see the field alerts and town administrator newsletter, etc. Im all signed up on both now. Thanks, that was super helpful!!

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Elise Couture (P2) via groups.io <elisecouture=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Juneteenth"s History
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2025 3:17:30 PM

Arthur,

I am so proud to share in the joy and celebrations that honor the history of today.

Thank you for keeping this history alive for all of us. We are all descendants of brutality—whether we are children of survivors or children of the perpetrators—acknowledging both the joys and traumas of today is vital in keeping our democracy healthy, alive, and moving forward.

To all those souls who built this nation brick by brick and dreamed of something better than what was presented them—I am forever humbled by their legacy of strength, power, truly American spirit.

Elise, P2

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: awcIII@yahoo.com
Cc: Brookline TM; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Juneteenth"s History
Date: Friday, June 20, 2025 6:46:15 AM

Beautiful and important statement, Arthur. We all need to learn and be reminded of our whole history, as some today attempt to erase it. Thank you.
Bob, P9

On Jun 19, 2025, at 12:57 AM, Arthur Conquest via groups.io <awcIII=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Juneteenth's History

On 19th June 1865, over 250,000 Black slaves in Galveston, TX received conformation of their emancipation, reaching a seminal date and achievement in this nation's history. It commemorated the birth of Black Independence Day, a celebration embraced by Black people throughout America.

Following the War Between the States, Juneteenth celebrations emerged as a tradition among formerly enslaved individuals and their families. These celebrations first took place in Texas but spread to other states where Black communities existed. Activities during these celebrations included religious services, storytelling, singing, games and food fests. One tradition included the symbolic act of discarding garments worn during enslavement into a river, representing a visual separation from human bondage.

Recognizing Juneteenth as a federal holiday gives Americans an opportunity to contemplate the complicated processes of emancipation that took place after President Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation on 22 September 1862. Juneteenth marks the day (19 June 1865) when Union Army General, Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, TX, and demanded the state's enslaved population be liberated. To communicate this demand, Granger read aloud General Order No. 3:

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1863 to 1864 that news of Lincoln's Proclamation spread—and Black slaves were able to celebrate freedom. Only the action of Congress to pass the 13th Amendment and the ratification by the necessary number of states on 6 December 1865, officially abolished slavery in every state, not just the confederacy.

Juneteenth is about building historical awareness and self-education. It was only a year after the events at Galveston that former slaves and their families gathered and celebrated their freedom. This tradition, which started in Texas, spread to Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Florida, and California.

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The effort to make Juneteenth a federal holiday is only recent however. Juneteenth fests were revived during Reconstruction II and the Civil Rights rebellion of the 1960s. And it was only when U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) pushed for federal recognition during Reconstruction III, the height of the Black Lives Matter protests, when the nationwide celebrations ignited.

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Truth/Justice,
Arthur Wellington Conquest III, P6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: "Brookline TMMA"
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Defend the Constitution and the Rule of Law - Saturday June 28th, 11am at Coolidge Corner
Date: Friday, June 20, 2025 7:45:51 AM

By a vote of 173 in favor, 15 opposed, and with 26 abstentions:

Town Meeting affirmed that it stands by the Constitution of the United States and the rule of law.

We, as the elected legislature of the Town of Brookline, further affirmed that we will defend the Constitution of the United States, and that we will rise to protect those who are illegally and unconstitutionally targeted because of their race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, military or veteran status, genetic information, marital status, receipt of public benefits, family status, or other characterization.

Lastly, we urged elected officials of the Town of Brookline, and residents of the town to join us in our defense of the Constitution, the rule of law and of our democracy.

In that context, please join Brookline PAX at the next bi-weekly Coolidge Corner Standout.

Sat, Jun 28 @ 11am
Brookline PAX Coolidge Corner Standout ›

Bring a sign and bring a friend.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

Groups.io Links:

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Topic
Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Susan Park via groups.io <susanforbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: bobw9090@gmail.com
Cc: awcIII@yahoo.com; Brookline TM; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Juneteenth"s History
Date: Friday, June 20, 2025 8:00:07 AM

Thanks Arthur!
Congratulations to all who helped at, participated in, and organized the Juneteenth event yesterday at the Ridley School as a way to remember the ideals of the process of Emancipation and the abolishment of Slavery. I echo Bob's sentiments!

Susan Park
TMM17

On Fri, 20 Jun 2025 at 6:46 AM Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Beautiful and important statement, Arthur. We all need to learn and be reminded of our whole history, as some today attempt to erase it. Thank you.
> Bob, P9
>
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>
> ## Juneteenth's History
>
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>
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>
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While Juneteenth doesn't eliminate structural racism in America, recognizing it as a federal holiday is a crucial step towards bringing the rich history of Blacks into the center of both our history and identity.

Truth/Justice,
Arthur Wellington Conquest III, P6

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Susan Park via groups.io <susanforbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc:	listserv TMMA
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date:	Friday, June 20, 2025 8:25:20 AM

Good morning All,

Thank you Jon for sharing this important article regarding our youth and cannabis addiction that experts and physicians are seeing in the young patients here in Boston, MA. It's apparent that many Brookline parents are concerned about the increasing prevalence of vaping and marijuana use at Brookline High School which has become a norm. The Town's 2023 Marijuana Landscape Assessment found that 30% of 12th graders at BHS reported using marijuana regularly.

How will Brookline support its students specifically with the cannabis issue at BHS? Please read the copy and pasted paragraphs from the article below for further context of cannabis addiction for in our youth:

We talked to physicians, psychiatrists and other clinicians who help teens and young adults with their mental health and addiction issues. From the prestigious teaching hospitals of Boston to peer counseling centers in suburban strip malls, they tell us the same thing: the teens and young adults in their care are now overwhelmingly needing treatment for their cannabis use.

"Cannabis is the number one reason for kids coming to the program," said **Dr. Sharon Levy,**chief of **Boston Children's Hospital Division of Addiction Medicine**.

"We're seeing increasing rates of psychosis associated with cannabis use," said **James McKowen**, a psychologist and program director of **Massachusetts General Hospital's Addiction Recovery Management Service (ARMS)**, which serves teens and young adults.

"It's become common, the young adults we see with psychosis," said **Chris Herren**, a former NBA basketball player now in recovery who is an owner of **Herren Wellness**, a residential treatment center in southeastern Massachusetts.

"Almost all of them are vaping high-potency THC," said **Dr. Aaron Quiggle**, a psychiatrist and medical director of Mass General's ARMS program.

Quiggle treated the teen whom we interviewed and some of the hundreds of

other patients who have been to the ARMS clinic in recent years.

The risks, he said, are clear.

"Teenagers who use high potency cannabis and use cannabis regularly are more likely to develop a cannabis use disorder and certainly are more likely to develop a psychosis," he said.

"Do you think the average person out there understands this risk?" 5 Investigates' Mike Beauet asked.

"I don't think so, no," Quiggle replied.

Thank you,
Susan Park
TMM17

On Wed, 18 Jun 2025 at 4:44 PM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues – If you haven't yet seen it, I recommend the following public health report from WCVB.
>
> https://www.wcvb.com/article/cannabis-crisis-psychosis-and-addiction-impacting-massachusetts-teens-and-young-adults/65080266
>
> Jonathan Davis
>
> TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc: listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date: Friday, June 20, 2025 2:30:50 PM

And it was all too predictable. Saw it in the 60s!!!! Wth lower potencies!. Why would it be different? And with higher potency?

Maybe now, that the Town's fiscal focus which was the only reason for Staff and Board push to approve the licenses, that they can't obtain the "community impact" monies they so counted on, perhaps now they will re-prioritize: Students' and adults' health. And altogether, productivity and life purpose,

Regina Frawley 16

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sarah Moghtader via groups.io <moghtader4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date: Friday, June 20, 2025 5:07:45 PM

Hi all,

I know that one group isn't enough to help all the need that is out there, but for those who it can help, I want you to know that there is a substance abuse counselor at the high school. Please refer to B-SIP.

I hope that as a community we can respond to substance abuse in a meaningful way by continuing to coordinate our youth agencies in town. We are at our best when young people have connections and activities, which is one reason why I supported our Town Meeting Resolution on Thriving Youth (Warrant Article 21).

Thanks,
Sarah Moghtader
TMM Pr 1
School Committee member

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Nancy Heller via groups.io <nancyhellerbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Arthur Conquest
Cc: Brookline TM; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Juneteenth"s History
Date: Saturday, June 21, 2025 12:48:26 PM

Hi Arthur,
Thanks for the excellent history of Juneteenth.
As you may remember, I grew up in Galveston. I remember, as a child, commemorating Juneteenth with my family. One of the traditions that we followed was eating foods that were red - I particularly remember the strawberries and watermelon - that reminded us of the blood shed by slaves. That was part of my experience.
Best, Nancy

On Jun 19, 2025, at 12:57 AM, Arthur Conquest via groups.io <awcIII=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

Juneteenth's History

On 19th June 1865, over 250,000 Black slaves in Galveston, TX received conformation of their emancipation, reaching a seminal date and achievement in this nation's history. It commemorated the birth of Black Independence Day, a celebration embraced by Black people throughout America.

Following the War Between the States, Juneteenth celebrations emerged as a tradition among formerly enslaved individuals and their families. These celebrations first took place in Texas but spread to other states where Black communities existed. Activities during these celebrations included religious services, storytelling, singing, games and food fests. One tradition included the symbolic act of discarding garments worn during enslavement into a river, representing a visual separation from human bondage.

Recognizing Juneteenth as a federal holiday gives Americans an opportunity to contemplate the complicated processes of emancipation that took place after President Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation on 22 September 1862. Juneteenth marks the day (19 June 1865) when Union Army General, Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, TX, and demanded the state's enslaved population be liberated. To communicate this demand, Granger read aloud General Order No. 3:

"The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired

labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages."

It wasn't until General Granger swept through other parts of the South from 1863 to 1864 that news of Lincoln's Proclamation spread—and Black slaves were able to celebrate freedom. Only the action of Congress to pass the 13th Amendment and the ratification by the necessary number of states on 6 December 1865, officially abolished slavery in every state, not just the confederacy.

Juneteenth is about building historical awareness and self-education. It was only a year after the events at Galveston that former slaves and their families gathered and celebrated their freedom. This tradition, which started in Texas, spread to Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, Florida, and California.

These festivities involved religious services, oral story-telling events, singing, and games, often centered around feasting at barbeques and picnics. Another common tradition involved dressing up. Historically, then, Juneteenth is a holiday for formerly enslaved Blacks and their descendants to celebrate their freedom through acts of symbolic resistance against American white supremacy.

The effort to make Juneteenth a federal holiday is only recent however. Juneteenth fests were revived during Reconstruction II and the Civil Rights rebellion of the 1960s. And it was only when U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) pushed for federal recognition during Reconstruction III, the height of the Black Lives Matter protests, when the nationwide celebrations ignited.

While Juneteenth doesn't eliminate structural racism in America, recognizing it as a federal holiday is a crucial step towards bringing the rich history of Blacks into the center of both our history and identity.

Truth/Justice,
Arthur Wellington Conquest III, P6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Susan Park via groups.io <susanforbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: moghtader4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date: Saturday, June 21, 2025 2:28:27 PM

Thank you Regina and Sarah:))

There is a new bill as described in this article that I support. Please take a look.

https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/5359470-marijuana-youth-substance-use-prevention/?fbclid=IwQ0xDSwLD2G1leHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHpUsWf8CWyQPKpsa5JTc7Ev_rPVVqr3wUs7trpV7-QmFei38r_NwwTBnm4Ub_aem_0oQb_V8Lagc2UW0LCukdiQ

Best,
Susan Park
TMM17

On Fri, 20 Jun 2025 at 5:07 PM Sarah Moghtader via groups.io <moghtader4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Hi all,
>
> I know that one group isn't enough to help all the need that is out there, but for those who it can help, I want you to know that there is a substance abuse counselor at the high school. Please refer to B-SIP.
>
> I hope that as a community we can respond to substance abuse in a meaningful way by continuing to coordinate our youth agencies in town. We are at our best when young people have connections and activities, which is one reason why I supported our Town Meeting Resolution on Thriving Youth (Warrant Article 21).
>
> Thanks,
> Sarah Moghtader
> TMM Pr 1
> School Committee member

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sarah Moghtader via groups.io <moghtader4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date:	Saturday, June 21, 2025 3:38:58 PM

Hi Susan,

Thank you for starting this conversation and for the link to the article above. There is reference for the need of an Ad campaign against abusing drugs as well as a suggestion to support legislation to regulate high potency marijuana. I am a supporter of such regulation. I understand that a campaign can have its merits, I am just a realist when it comes to kids. The kids who need to hear the message that smoking, vaping or consuming edible THC is a mental health risk are not the ones who will be reached by ad campaigns.

The type of marijuana that is being sold to youth is very different from the weed that my generation knew (not to make me sound like I am 100 years old!), so as parents we should all inform ourselves. And, as happens with lobbyists for many issues, the money that the marijuana industry is putting up to fight this regulation is harming kids.

Good idea on your part, Susan, to call attention to this issue and to ask your fellow TMMs to support a bill. Does anyone know what can be done here locally?

I would like us to pursue legislation as well as tapping into other solutions for adolescent social and emotional health. Our high school gives students great outlets to ignite imagination. intellectualism and curiosity and to foster connections. But, what is our role as a town? A teen center serves a purpose, a pool and ice rink are great places for young people to recreate. Club sports and Rec sports promote thriving youth. The Brookline Center helps by offering group and individual therapy.

At the same time, could we do better by youth if we had a town employee setting goals, implementing professional development and bringing different town agencies together? Or is there a role for our department of public health to support thriving youth? I hope we can continue to discuss this need and gather support.

Best,
Sarah

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sarah Moghtader via groups.io <moghtader4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date:	Saturday, June 21, 2025 4:55:18 PM

Hi Susan,

(This message was edited from one posted earlier.)

Thank you for starting this conversation and for the link to the article above. There is reference for the need of an Ad campaign against abusing drugs as well as a suggestion to support legislation to regulate high potency marijuana. I am a supporter of such regulation. I understand that a campaign can have its merits, I am just a realist when it comes to kids. The kids who need to hear the message that smoking, vaping or consuming edible THC is a mental health risk are not the ones who will be reached by ad campaigns.

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Good idea on your part, Susan, to call attention to this issue and to ask your fellow TMMs to support a bill. Does anyone know what can be done here locally?

Best,
Sarah

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To:	"Brookline TMMA"; Brookline PAXmembers
Cc:	"Joslin Murphy"
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action on WA30"; & "City vs Town & a Charter Comm"n"]
Date:	Saturday, June 21, 2025 7:19:07 PM
Attachments:	WA30 slides 1-4.pdf Trump"s Diversion tactics.pdf MR WA30 speech final-5.pdf WA30, PAX WA 0527 addenda Recommendations.pdf

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After (thankfully) some Day Job time, I finally (really!), "briefly" dip in the post-TMtg fray re WA30, MCFG, and the (existential!) Charter Change issue, i.e., the 2 (earlier/above) Subject Lines:

1. First, as many noticed & I'd earlier feared, & this Thurs. nite confirmed, at June 5th's T/Mtg the hot/muggy weather interacted very badly w/ my 4 new (non-fatal!) health issues. Hindsight: I should have (regrettably) Zoomed in – as I had nites 1-3. So **I**, **(A)** apologize to Petitioners, to co-presenter & harmfully short-changed Joslin, & to all TMM's for mis-judging my issues of both podium/delivery and the pace/length of my prepared remarks. And **(B)** ATTACHED, emphases (sorry) showing, is my planned **SPEECH**, which at home seemed 8 minutes, and the 3 of 4 **SLIDES** that I had to skip.

2. More importantly, I'm thrilled that WA30 at least herein generated much listserv attention (70+ messages in the 2 threads), which neither ~ 75% of TMM's nor Mod'r Karon felt was necessary-important June 5th. Whether or not you/they were "right," see my email signature's *de Montaigne & Gandhi*. And, I now follow-up re BOTH T/Mtg's perfunctory "debate" [sic] AND this cyber, bigger, & still very superficial listserv one:

(a) As in my SPEECH, now compounded by many anti-WA30 &/or pro-city Emails, STILL: **(i)** "*after now six months and, yes, thousands of words, **NOT a SINGLE specific criticism ever been addressed**. Court Evidence Rules call such SILENCE Adoptive Admissions"! Will anyone answer any specifics ~~tonight~~?"* And **(ii)** We'd hoped TMM's would take the time to skim BOTH sides' "evidence" and consequential "credibility." BUT **(iii)** instead, all I heard -- & see -- anti-WA30 are **Conclusory,** *Counter-Factual, Diversionary Sound-Bites, Red-Herrings, & Straw-(Wo)Men.* … like those (daily) by USA's *Concentrated-Power-Dodger in Chief* (also ATTACHED). **FOR EXAMPLES …**

… (b) We've asserted mainly **four** 800-Pound Gorillas: **(1)** Not only was **MCFG --** *except for* Sandy/DMG's 2½-pager-(out of ~***105*** **p**ages) – overwhelmingly pro-city **BIASED,** also except Prof. Lessig's (very far below) non-committal, excellent, but impractical ideas; **(2)** BUT, while all thoughtful people (including us, Sandy & David-Marc) are "*biased*," MCFG's work-product was by the Bias *overall* **fatally infected, inadequate**!; **(3)** the Charter Change **BALLOT PROCESS** is, dangerously flawed; & **(4)** ergo our (very diligent) **VOTERS deserve(d)** from **US** "Leaders" far more & far better "FACTS" (like maybe, per Supplement #3, p. 6, "focus[] primarily on comparisons to NEWTON"). On each of those big issues we tried to present plentiful, specific "*evidence*," not merely conclusory opinions, but then -- & now -- still get naught except **CONCLUSORY**-etc.(-above) "responses" [sic].

(c) SPECIFICALLY:

(i) MCFG's *BIAS*: Re WA30's & my SPEECH's specific examples, we got/get harsh

denials by **1st,** (*Asst Mod'r*) **SANDY G.** who earlier denigrated WA30 as "an embarrassment [to us]", then us [**C**omb/**R**pts Supp #3, fn. 1) as "harassers." *NOTE* though that his T/Mtg anti-WA30 speech actually admitted that (***ALL emphases ADDED***) "*many of the interim reports* were *"exposed … as biased in favor of a city government*" -- referring to the 8 Reports that (after 13 mos.) the Feb. 26th WA30 ("harassingly") criticized. And, even that was a euphemism. As of WA30, ***NO*** Report favored a Town -- as those who even skimmed WA30 seemingly should've seen. AND their (then only four) "expert" guests had ALL been pro-City. He also said the 4 pro-city members' main (WA31) Report was "a *fairly reasonable* case," and "*the comm'ee produced* 105 pages of reports," another euphemism. For all but 3 Reports (17 pages) -- he/it should have said, "*individual* committee members produced…" Finally, he asserted "*these reports all are more or less useful.*" We respectfully, strongly differ! See my Speech; C/Rpt Supp #3, pp 3-5; & (also ATTACHD) PAX's May *27 Addendum WA Recommendations,* fn. 8, "Stockholm Syndrome" (re Sandy).

2nd, (*Mod'r*) **NEIL W** (as usual omitting he'd been City Charter Campaign's Treasurer), denigrated -- "[our] torrent of criticism" to his 2024 replacing (pro-Town) MCFG Member E. Childs with 2 B4E activists -- saying "*OMG*!... Moderators appoint smart, *independent* people … who may come to conclusions *you don't want to hear*" Again, *cf.,* the "*evidence*," like our **(A)** *Explanation* ***pp 30-8,9*** re BOTH **(i)** Lisa S' & Katherine H's 2024 appointments, AND **(ii)** Lisa's at best dubious Report (Appendix B-5), and also **(B)** our specific critiqueS of the WA31 main 4-member pro city Report [Supp 3, *supra*]. We'd hoped TMM's would get to "question" and "judge" both the Bias issue and the opposing MCFG evaluations. **Not!** -- then or since.

3rd, PAUL W, see my SPEECH re June 4th, when -- before hearing from hand-raised me -- he did a *180° flip* from C/Rpts 30-16 (3-1-1), for reasons I can't prove but could easily & educatedly infer from a May 20th phone call (re DPW's privatization!). On June 5th he told T/Mtg **(a)** MCFG had been "dogged by [us] critics" (see Aristotle, ii, below); and **(b)** recklessly misrepresented our "*augmenting*" of MCFG as "*rehashing. … a retrial*" – like B4E's alleged "*re-doing*." And, he asserted that our Referral motion was because we "don't like the tone or conclusions, … and just hop[ing] for different answers." *Cf.,* my Speech and our Referral *Explanation*: **"***W30 was/is NOT is about the MCFG. Referral* seems, ***prospectively***, *a no-brainer* – **for the "VOTERS"!** Then he (also recklessly) urged "trust" in a later Charter Commission. (See BALLOT issues, below.) Frankly, like obviously pro-city John VS (Supp #3, 4-5), Paul's far smarter than all that! Bias can "*trump*" brains.

PS, my/our big THANKS to SBM's **Bernard G** & **David P,** who earlier – but with Paul – had supported WA30 *as-is*, based only on original Resolved #5; and then June 5th voted *for* Referral, the latter signed up to speak but muzzled like some (mere) TMM's.

& Mike TOFFEL whose intellect like all the above & the MCFG is also obvious, wrote Thurs, June 5th– not only factually falsely, but more importantly irrelevantly – "[MCFG's meetings] *discussions* appear to be the complete opposite of those *impressions* of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal." ►His falsity as to the discussions (like *inter* many *alias* omitting that MCFG had only 4 pro-city "experts" in its 13 pre-WA30 mos!) aside, *neither our two speeches nor our 19 pages* of Explanations

mentioned either the meetings' tone or substance! See above, **"*Dodger in Chief*.**" We instead provided many easier-to-see (for those who'd skim them) specific *examples* documenting MCFG's procedural and substantive Bias. That was far easier than taking, from flawed voice-recognition transcripts, (many) additional "evidence" snippets.

And, *ad nauseam*, ONLY *ONE* of our specified examples has (yet) been addressed, that (weakly) by Neil W re his 2 B4E appointments (above). As for that, and the rest, "we rest our [Bias] case."

(ii) alleged "CHILLING" effect, a late anti-"augment" argument: e.g. **Sandy**: "Who'd be willing to serve on a new committee, given the constant stream of criticism of [Mcfg]?" And **Paul W:** "A new committee undermines the very premise of volunteer leadership … erod[ing] trust in our process … send[ing] a chilling message to every volunteer. …Who will step up next time? This … [would] *fracture* our govnt"

►"*Gimme a break!*" Re my own (fallible!) self, I often cite **Aristotle,** "to escape criticism, say nothing, do nothing, be nothing." One of our current, outstanding strengths is our maybe un-surpassed "*Civic Engagement,*" albeit hugely un-appreciated -- indeed denigrated-- by the pro-city folk. See re Chair Berry, C/R 30/9-10, & then the pro-city 4 in WA31 -- vs. Supp #3, p5, WA30 & Gov. Dukakis (App. A), and even *Sandy's Report*. Who among you "engaged" "poster-children" buys that *chilling effect*? That "*Dodger in Chief*" assertion, evokes to ACLU'r me a alleged, phony "deterrent" rationale making USA a worldwide leader in executions & inmates -- easy to assert, emotionally appealing-- & factually ludicrous.

(iii) <u>Substance/Merits</u> for "Augmenting" -- for the so-called "VOTERS," a few BIG issues, many touted in seductive sound-bites by pro-city-ites -- again/still ALL our answers being *100% ignored* by WA30 opponents & pro-city advocates, e.g.:

- **<u>BALLOT Issues, (specific) Flaws</u>:** Again, we get only diversionary platitudes, like at T/Mtg by both **<u>PAUL W</u>** and **<u>NEIL W</u>**, as well as emails by other pro-city advocates – e.g. **Jonathan Golden** (another *City Charter Campaign* leader) & **Jonathan Klein** (another *B4E* Board member), "Let's trust the voters," & **Andy Fischer**, "It's likely that candidates would run … because they're open minded." **Mr. Klein** far below points to 4 irrelevant communities (but I now delete his plentiful, irrelevant data), asserting "<u>In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected</u>. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers *a structured, democratic process."*

  ►His 4 communities prove 0, especially Newton; and the other 3 do NOT have our *development* pressures – nor our AAA bond rating! See instead the "stubborn things" FACTS: Supp #3, p1, my SPEECH, & **Jon Margolis** (Thurs, Jun 5th 3:09 pm, "the anti-democratic" process") – e.g. re "campaign contributions from *real estate developers,* like also for Newton & Boston mayors [**<u>SLIDE 3</u>**]. Will any referral No voters, including many who'll vote no on being a city, now predict (or *bet?) we're wrong* about either B4E's motives OR Developers' looming money -- for both (A) *changing to a city* and (B) electing and re-*electing (forever) mayors*? There may be no evidence (yet) on the 1st, b/c (again) no prior town's Charter issue had our *development* pressures. **Rebecca** at a MCFG meeting was asked if they'd run a pro-city *slate*, and denied planning that. Anyone want to bet they don't -- or buy Swampland in Coolidge Corner? Or that "*Money [doesn't] Talk[]"?* Relatedly, how will Voters know (1) who's

whom, and (2) especially the so-called "facts"? On the 2 , again see my **Speech & SLIDE 3**; C/R 30-8 (re Newton); & Supp #3 pp 1, 2,4,5. *Welcome to Brookline, Developers' PACs*!

- our alleged lack of **Transparency** ►How about Mayors -- vs our S-Bd under the OML? … [Supp #3, pp 2,4]
- … instead, cities have **Concentrated Power** (again, behind closed doors) -- vs our great **Checks & Balances** [See C/R's 30-2, 7, 8, & Gov. Dukakis (App A); Cf. "No Kings!" and https://bsanders-astro.pages.dev/oligarchy/]
- our allegedly **Confused** voters [Mcfg's 4-member pro-city Report, "a *Dizzying Array*"]► See my SPEECH, including the paragraph deleted for time saving [re 1988 LWV study vs. Lisa s's Report from an alleged Newton expert re Brookline] (Can't we see that alleged POLL?)
- relatedly, re **Voter Turnout,** ►See our App B-3; C/R 30-6,7, & Supp #3, 3-4: **Chair Berry**, in one of the most obviously/fatally **biased** Reports (later buried fr WA31), said that our FoG depresses Turnout! A later (yes, objective and fair) report by Ms. Haenschen refuted Prof. Berry's. >OOPS, Never Mind!
- our alleged lack of **Accountability**. ►[Supp #3, pp 3 & 4; also my Speech & **SLIDE 2.**
- our **Campaign Contributions**. ►Again, see above, & my SPEECH ("*Citizens United*") & **SLIDE 3 –** e.g. Boston now!
- Our alleged lack of "**Leadership**" – the S-Bd called by City Charter Campaign leaders, "*The Kiddie Table*" ► Other than similar conclusory denigrations, or worse Chair Berry's [__] reference to Speaker McCormick [C/R 30-7], they basically 100% ignored **half of** our Govnt, **the Executive Branch**. (see Supp #3, p3)
- Our many **Strengths** ►e.g. Whereas # 6(1); Gov. **Dukakis** (App. A); even **S. Gadsby**, App B-8 [C/R 30-12 bottom; Supp #3, p4, fn13 (e.g. *#1 Best Place to Live in MA, #7 USA suburb*)] *Cf* again **J.Golden** June 5th 11:35 am, instead alleging our "our menacing … structural deficit, employee morale and turnover ..."; and similarly (also *supra*) **J.Klein** [far below June 6, 5:39 pm] "We are facing multiple challenges:.." ►Which MA municipalities lacks *school funding* issues? Again, do "FACTS" matter? Will Voters know them? How? From a 2026 pro-city Commission? See **SLIDE 4,** *Einstein* – vs per my SPEECH ("*Know Nothings*")

(d) Finally, for 2 reasons I reply to **Bettina Neuefeind**, who BTWay in 2014 wrote, "I believe Brookline to be such a highly functional town because of the extremely high level of citizen engagement in local issues, and I welcome the opportunity to participate" And she's 100% spot-on re her other half, Lawrence Lessig, who never sided either pro-town or pro-city. As she acknowledges, WE **(i)** commended his (belated, fascinating) *community engagement* initiatives idea in our Postscript/Addendum [C/Rpt 30-13] idea, and **(ii)** agreed, yes, he "had a structural scheduling conflict." BUT **(iii)** IMHO the failure to accommodate him was yet more MCFG bias, since his nationwide *Citizens United* expertise was sorely needed —and never addressed. Sandy G too referred to that idea in his speech, urging *the S-Bd to implement it.* YES, Grrrreat idea! BUT esp'y in light of WA30's resounding defeat, what are the odds? (See Swampland above.) Please prove me wrong, S-Bd, i.e., you 3 "Don't augment, just trust the Voters" ones! Knowing *I'll* be ignored, why not heed *SANDY*—for the "Voters"?

Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM (& Chair)
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
[martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/; listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel **de Montaigne (**1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."* attrib'd to **Gandhi**; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGES (EMPHASES now added)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Margolis via groups.io
Sent: Friday, June 6, 2025 7:40 PM
To: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

First, I did not say that the system for voting on a charter commission was undemocratic. I said that it was anti-democratic.

Second, I am of the strong belief that Newton did, indeed, revise its charter several years ago, so perhaps you have been the victim of yet another error from AI.

Third, I suggest that none of the ills you identify are the result of our present system of government, and that changing to another system, particularly becoming a city, would be likely to deal with them. Apart, perhaps, from the need for more commercial revenue in the event that those with an interest in such development were able to lobby, or worse, a city council and mayor to make changes that Town Meeting would likely reject. Although I believe that Brookline needs more revenue from commercial property, I also think that development on such a basis would be a bad thing.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 6, 2025 at 05:39:30 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein <jklein728@gmail.com> wrote:

Jonathan — I understand your concerns, but respectfully disagree that the process is "undemocratic."

First, the creation of a Charter Commission is not a mandate for change — it's a democratic invitation to study and *debate* our form of government. The process is deliberative. The commission would take 18 months to hold hearings, solicit public input, analyze data, and draft a proposal. That proposal, whatever it may be, must then be submitted to voters in a town-wide election. Brookline residents have three clear chances to decide: first, whether to provide the 6,200 "wet" signatures required to start the process; second, a town wide vote on whether to form a commission, and electing its members; and third, whether to adopt any proposal it ultimately makes.

I have been able to identify (with the help of ChatGPT) six Charter Commissions in Massachusetts (in four towns) over the past 30 years in Massachusetts. Here the results:

Amherst…

Newton…

South Hadley…

Framingham…

In most cases, the proposed changes were rejected. These instances demonstrate that forming a Charter Commission does not predetermine governmental change as you fear. Instead, it offers a structured, democratic process for communities to evaluate and decide on their governance structures.

We are facing multiple challenges: funding our basic governmental services, funding our schools, multiple losses of top leaders from our government and schools, increasingly unaffordable housing, and the inability to make the changes we need (despite 20+ years of efforts by EDAB and others) to raise commercial tax revenue.

It seems reasonable to look, formally, at our form of government and see if we can do better. To that end, I continue to support the petition to form and elect a Charter Commission.

Best regards,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 3:09 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
> Thank you, Jonathan, at least for giving me a good chance to explain to TMMs who may not have followed the issue, why a charter commission is at best a deeply flawed idea.
>
> The problem lies in the statutory scheme laid out by the Legislature, which puts a huge thumb on the scale in favor of charter change. In Brookline, that would almost certainly result in a commission suggesting that we become a city. And, as people involved in politics, even if only at the local level, we should know that a recommendation to become a city would almost certainly be adopted, because it is easier just to adopt such a suggestion from what would appear to be an unbiased commission, although likely it would be no such thing.
>
> The unfairness is inherent in the requirement that citizens vote on whether to elect a commission and then, in the same election vote for the members of such a body. That would mean that those who believe we should continue as a town would need to run on a platform of, "Vote No on the commission, but elect me in case it carries." In other words, they would be behind the 8-ball from the beginning.
>
> Also, candidates for the putative commission would run town-wide, which would require raising substantial campaign contributions to be competitive. On the other hand, those who favor changing to a city form of government would be much, much more likely to attract money from those who want to do business with the municipality, and believe--rightly, as the debate over privatizing trash services showed--that it would be easier to get their way without that pesky Town Meeting in the way. Think real estate developers, for example.

Now, it is theoretically possible that some candidates for the commission would be undecided on the principal issue, but do we really think that people would spend the time and money to campaign if they had not already decided which side to come down on? If you think that, come and see me, because I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell you at a really good price.

To me, the anti-democratic nature of the procedure involved poisons the whole process. I should feel differently if we were to vote on whether to have a commission and then, in a later election should it pass, elect members for it, but we do not have that option.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 5, 2025 at 12:44:32 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Fellow TMMs,

I signed up to speak tonight, but we probably won't get that far down the list, so here is my "two cents" worth.

I have found that this debate has much heat but not much light. It seems to me that we formed a committee, set up a process, they worked hard for 18 months, and produced lots if useful material for us all to review and consider. Just because some TMMs don't like the results, which they clearly hoped would be more favorable toward the status quo, is not a reason for a "do over."

I agree with Jonathan Golden that this is a question for the voters. There is a campaign to collect signatures to create an official Charter Commission, with elected members. When and if that happens (I have signed the petition and support the effort), there will be plenty of opportunity for further research and debate, and an opportunity for the voters to ultimately decide. I support that process, and oppose this attempt to create yet another body to endlessly debate the issues. I urge everyone to vote NO ACTION on WA 30, no matter what form it is in after any amendments.

Stay cool, see you tonight.

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 5, 2025, at 12:22 PM, Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi, Mike
>
> I attended the better part of one year's meeting, in-person. It is not true that the "majority" were long-time TMMs. Utterly not true. Indeed only two members had years of TMM, Sandy and David Mark. The chair, never attended anything in town, violated the OML so many times simply because he had no idea how Brookline's public "meetings" usually are run. One member, showed up the first time, then I never saw him again, yet his strong opinions are cited.
>
> One member never was a TMM but afdmitted she thought we needed to be a "City".

Any trained researcher knows that is bias and will color conclusions. Finally with the two additional membres under the new (now) Moderator, the deck was stacked, as both espoused we should be a city. I stopped wasting my tim with such a poorly structured and ill-informed committee.

If medical science were conducted as poorly as this committee was, and its research so poorly conducted (and shame on academics who should have high standards of research, we would not trust the results. Neither should thoughtful TMMs.

When the idea of a charter was first proposed ON FACEBOOK, by the way. I was on board with a legitimate study. I took time and went to Framinghan and located the attorney who did the charter study there. I cared, and had high hopes, and approached our first meetings with optimism and open mind. Clearly I recognized some of the pitfalls of our Town structrure.

But I'm a well trained researcher. From the beginning it was clear this was a biased, and rather civically benighted appointments, however ON PAPER it looked good. The hostility I saw in one member made it obvious they had an agenda, and when I finally asked, admitted it. (That person never was a TMM, not ever.).

But academics are often only "trained" on faculty in-fighting. And power is the end. Whole departments can (and often are) upended. Tenured faculty even leaves sinecures. One of my best tenured professors in grad school left over a fight over the new design of the library!! The department chair made his life miserable thereafter. Traces of that mind set was obvious from day one. A powerful chair, not interested in listening to anyone outside the committee, and shockingly unaware of OML legalities--and hostile if confronted with that reality. Sometimes doubling down.

I stopped going--and if you know my (former) reputation, that is an anomaly for me. But painful to watch the "blind lead the blind".

The results are defective, biased. I support Marty's views, and his Motion.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 11:59 AM Mike Toffel via groups.io <mtoffel=hbs.edu@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues, I attended several meetings of the (since dissolved) Moderator's Committee on Forms of Municipal Government. My impression of the discussions appear to be the complete opposite of those impressions of WA30-petitioner Marty Rosenthal. While he expresses concern about pro-City-biased members, what struck me from observing the meetings was that several Moderator's Committee members who are/were long-standing Town Meeting members were highly supportive and even quite defensive about the Town Meeting system. In contrast, I found the non-TMMs to be much more open to comparing TM form of government to other forms; I didn't observe their questions and comments to be pro-City-biased. You can watch the video recorded meetings to make your own assessment.
>
> As such, if we pass a version of Article 30 tonight then asks the Select Board to form a committee, I urge the Select Board to avoid appointing

as members those current and former TMMs who seem mission driven to defend Town Meeting, and instead choose qualified individuals who are less entrenched in our current system. To be sure, all stakeholder groups should be heard and considered by the committee, but the adjudication and report-writing should be done by those without an interest in the outcome – either perpetuating it (e.g., current TMMs dedicated to defending TM) or to changing it (e.g., City Charter Campaign leaders). This seems to me the only way to avoid repeating the unproductive clashes I observed in the prior MC.

-Mike Toffel, TMM8

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 5, 2025 11:35 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues, Yes, I am a proud member of the steering committee of the Brookline City Charter Campaign.

The fact that a Town Meeting Member can ignore thousands of signatures and cannot identify voices who feel left out by the current system speaks for itself.

The fact that the charter campaign is deemed an existential threat more menacing than our structural deficit, employee morale and turnover, and so many other top town priorities speaks for itself.

I know that it will be a robust debate tonight and many of my colleagues will make the case better than I have. Whatever happens tonight, I know that Brookline voters will have the last word, exactly how it should work in a democracy.

Jonathan Golden TMM11
Jonathan Golden, PhD

On Thu, Jun 5, 2025 at 10:47 AM <neil@nrgordon.com> wrote:

> >>As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete.<<
>
> By no objective measure is the work [sic] of MCFG "complete." The Committee was charged with, *inter alia*, "**objectively** and **fairly** evaluating the **positive** and **negative** aspects of the various forms of government in Massachusetts. The Committee chose a different, biased mission, "to determine if there are advantages that would be ***superior*** to Representative Town Meeting." For over a year, with palpable bias, Committee members **touted the pros of cities**, **and the cons of Representative Town Meeting**.

>>It is both thoughtful and substantial.<<

What the Committee touted as "research," was, in too many cases, thoughtless supposition. As for "substantial" work, the Committee, as such, mostly listened to presentations by individual members. There was little discussion, and never a vote, to accept, reject, or modify presentations made by individuals working independently. Those unvetted papers are in the Combined Reports, under the *misleading* title "Reports of the Moderator's Committee."

>>That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission.<<

The formal structure you refer to [*MGL Chapter 43B, Section 9*], doesn't require study or discussion, and makes no mention of "improvement." The statute is quite clear, and quite bare boned.

>>Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — … voters who feel their voices are not being heard …<<

I heard, and read, lots about economic development, housing, and fiscal challenges and responsibility. Voices not being heard, not so much.

>>… this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure …<<

As has been the case for decades (and was essentially ignored by the MCFG), this Town Meeting has been dominated by citizen petitions, a feature of our grass-roots, Representative Town Meeting legislature. And heard last night during the debate on the transfer tax home rule was the importance of any formal proposal *coming "back to Town Meeting*."

>>The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, …<<

No, they don't. Petitioners ask that the work of the MCFG be "augmented," for reasons that are apparent to anyone who actually examines, objectively, the work [sic] of the Committee.

Separately, you're not the first member of the Steering Committee of the City Charter Campaign to fail to mention your affiliation. Let's not pretend that you're looking for an objective conversation, within the confines of a charter commission, or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1 Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc. 87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446 (508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 4, 2025 11:03 PM
To: Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] No Action on Warrant Article 30

Colleagues, I will miss Town Meeting tomorrow night to attend the 30th anniversary of the Jews of Boston book and its authors (and my mentors) Jonathan Sarna and Ellen Smith.

I submit my remarks here for your consideration.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

I rise and urge you to vote No Action on WA30. As we've seen in the Combined Reports under Article 31, the work of MCFG is complete. It is both thoughtful and substantial. There is no reason to refer this work for review or expansion to a new Select Board committee. Rather, we should thank our fellow residents for their diligent contributions, and – if the voters ask for it as they seem to be doing -- continue the conversation about our form of government in a more formal, structured way.

That formal structure for study, discussion, and actionable proposals for improvement is called a Charter Commission. If you think that work is important, as I do, let's do what we can to get it started. Given the nature of the differences that emerged on the Moderator's committee, we have ample reason to take that step. Given the themes of the most recent Town elections — limited commercial development, a huge school budget gap, and voters who feel their voices are not being heard — we have ample reason to take that step. Indeed, this Town Meeting has given us even more reasons to look at our structure as so many of our most intense debates revolved around perceived failures of our policy process, voice, influence, and leadership.

The petitioners keep insisting that we should endlessly contain this discussion among ourselves, in a small, appointed committee whose principal task – according to their explanation -- is to defend Representative Town Meeting and the Select Board because the MCFG did not do so adequately. That gets us nowhere, which may be what the petitioners actually intend.

As someone who has been talking about this out in the community for over a year, I know that Brookliners actually have a lot to say about what's good and bad about our form of government. So let the people vote on whether it's time for a charter commission! Let them, through a charter commission, process, debate and then decide what kind of government they want! Let's trust the voters to engage on this, to be a part of Team Brookline to solve our communal challenges together.

> Please join me in voting No Action on any of the motions under WA30. Thank you.
>
> **Jonathan Golden, PhD**

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Hon. MICHAEL DUKAKIS, 85 Perry St., Dec. 28, 2024
(contact: Marty Rosenthal, martyros@world.std.com)

Opposing Changing Brookline to a City

Some are trying to make Brookline a City, with a Mayor and City Council replacing our executive branch, Select Board, and our legislature, 263 "representative" Town Meeting Members ("TMM's").

As a Brookline lifer whose many proud decades of public service started here as a TMM, *I strongly oppose, and resist, that misguided -- and mischaracterized -- effort*.

While I long ago wondered if a City would be better, I now see zero evidence supporting that. For a few decades, Brookline has been very professionally run – credit also to our excellent (well-staffed) Town Administrators. Can we improve? Sure. But do we need radical change? No!

Most importantly, I deeply cherish our perhaps unsurpassed "Grassroots ***Civic Engagement***." Town Meeting is a low-budget entryway into government service, and it's a practical way to optimize local, neighborhood-level involvement in government. And, TMM's, with (their) 28-Member Advisory Committee, and the five Select Board Members, are not only fabulous community voices, but also great "*checks and balances*" -- for "the people," against concentrated power of, yes, even local government. As per Justice Brandeis, "[t]he most important office in a democracy is the office of citizen."

And, Brookline's chronic, serious affordability/exclusivity issue makes it hard enough to get less privileged, ***more inclusive/diverse*** TMM's , where talking to neighbors can get you elected. In Newton, it's about $15-17,000 to run for City Council; for Mayor maybe $150-200,000! So much for inclusivity.

Town Meeting passed a 2023 resolution urging a *Moderator's Committee* charged with studying "*the pros and cons* of various forms of government." I'm told that the resulting Committee has hardly focused on, let alone seriously discussed, Brookline's current strengths, including perhaps the greatest one -- its grassroots, neighborhood-level Civic Engagement.

Those proposing changing to a City offer *an alleged* -- and harmful -- *solution* to an alleged problem that does not, in fact, exist. I've seen not even slight justification for potentially squelching the voices of Brookline's -- yes, and thankfully, activist -- residents.

The Boston Globe

Serving our community since 1872

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2025

Beating an incumbent mayor a very tall order

To oust Wu, Kraft would have to snap a 76-year Boston tradition

By Niki Griswold
GLOBE STAFF

The year was 1947, and James Michael Curley, Boston's legendary "rascal king," had just returned to City Hall after serving time in federal prison for mail fraud during his fourth term as mayor.

"I have accomplished more in one day than has been done in the five months of my absence," he boasted at the end of his first day back.

But his hubris proved to be too much for voters: When Curley sought reelection in 1949, voters ousted him in favor of then-City Clerk John B. Hynes.

Such is the power of incumbency in Boston: It took a conviction and prison sentence to unseat Curley, and in the 76 years that followed, not a single incumbent has lost, even when he appeared vulnerable. It is a historical record that philanthropist Josh Kraft must grapple with as he seeks to displace the current incumbent, Mayor Michelle Wu, the first woman and person of color elected to lead the city.

To be sure, there are no guarantees in politics, and Kraft has a number of advantages that could help balance the scales. As a son of the billionaire owner of the Patriots, Kraft is likely to benefit from higher-than-usual name recognition for a first-time candidate, as well as access to virtually unlimited funds, whether from his own pocket or those of his wealthy connections.

Still, more than seven decades of election results show Kraft faces long odds in his bid to unseat Wu amid the benefits incumbency brings.

Kraft appears clear-eyed about the task at hand.

"I enter this race as an underdog, and I know this is going to be an uphill fight, but I'm excited for the challenge," Kraft said at his Feb. 4 campaign launch.

The incumbency advantage has translated into a relatively small number of Boston mayors over the past 76 years, given that most of them have stayed in office for multiple terms.

The division and unrest sparked by court-ordered desegregation of

INCUMBENTS, Page A10



PHOTOS BY BRETT PHELPS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Matt Milley did laps in the 75-foot-long indoor pool in the Millennium Residences at Winthrop Center, in the Financial District.

UP ABOVE IT ALL

The sky is the new status neighborhood, with amenities you wouldn't dream of



Club VIP is a pet day care and wellness spa in the Millennium Residences offering such treats as aromatherapy facials.

By Beth Teitell
GLOBE STAFF

It was frigid out, and so icy that all over town pedestrians were tumbling. But on the 35th floor of the Millennium Residences at Winthrop Center, life felt as easy as a summer afternoon, and Richard Baumert was marveling at the lap pool: 75 feet long, surrounded by floor-to-ceiling windows, its water a bewitching shade of . . . let's call it *concierge blue*.

"You're doing laps in the sky!" exclaimed Baumert, the managing partner of Millennium Partners. He sounded as awed as a child — and as strategic as a developer positioning his building against rival luxury buildings. "This is a huge draw for people."

Down on earth, where rents have grown punishing and some Bostonians are being pushed from their homes, affordable housing has become a central issue in the mayoral campaign.

But in the sky — the city's new status neighborhood — the fight is not over meeting the basic needs of life, but over lifestyle. It's a war of amenities. On beast mode.

In a world where two-bedroom condos routinely go

AMENITIES, Page A7

Democrats shift, and shutdown is averted

Party sharply split about best way to resist Trump

By Catie Edmondson and Carl Hulse
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Friday narrowly averted a government shutdown at midnight, passing a GOP-written stopgap spending measure after minority leader Chuck Schumer of New York and a small group of Democrats joined Republicans in allowing it to advance.

The final vote to pass the spending measure, which would fund the government through Sept. 30, was 54-46, nearly along party lines. But the key vote came earlier, when after days of Democratic agonizing, Schumer and nine other members of his caucus supplied the votes needed to allow it to move ahead, effectively thwarting a filibuster by their own party in a bid to prevent a shutdown.

The action came just hours before a midnight deadline to avoid a lapse in funding.

The spending debate inflamed intraparty tensions among Democrats that have simmered for weeks about how to mount the most effective resistance to President Trump at a time when he is taking full advantage of his governing trifecta — control of the White House, Senate, and House — to trample on congressional power, slash federal funding, and fire government workers with little regard for the guardrails that normally constrain the executive branch.

Schumer's abrupt decision to reverse himself and allow the spending legislation to advance stunned many of his colleagues and angered many Democratic lawmakers and progressive activists who were spoiling for a shutdown fight to

SHUTDOWN, Page A6

IRS's progress likely sacrificed to DOGE ax

By Jim Puzzanghera
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — For the first time in about a decade, things were looking up for the Internal Revenue Service last year.

A funding boost in 2022 had started reversing years of staffing and enforcement problems. A new focus on millionaires with large past-due tax payments brought in $1.1 billion in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, the agency said. The hiring of additional customer service representatives allowed the IRS to answer almost 9 million more phone calls than two years earlier and many branches added night and weekend hours, according to the agency's independent National Taxpayer Advocate. The agency even launched an ambitious pilot program that allowed people in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and 10 other states to prepare and file their federal returns online for free.

Now those improvements could be reversed as the Trump administration's aggressive budget-cutting effort has hit the IRS just as the April 15 filing deadline approaches, raising concerns about delays in processing returns and sending out refunds.

"This is not an agency that is doing something superfluous. It's a core government function," said Mark W. Everson, who served as IRS commission-

IRS, Page A6

The Ides have it

Saturday: Warming up. High 52-57. Low 44-49.

Sunday: Still warm, showers. High 61-66. Low 51-56.

Weather and Comics, D4-5. Obituaries, C9.

VOL. 307, NO. 74
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President Vladimir Putin insisted that Ukraine order some of its forces to surrender, hours after President Trump said the United States had "productive" discussions with him about a possible cease-fire. **A4.**

Senators pressed Dr. Mehmet Oz, nominated to head Medicare and Medicaid, on proposals that would significantly affect the health care coverage for half of all Americans. **A2.**

Governor Maura Healey announced new limits on who can enter the state's emergency shelter system. **B1.**

South Boston leaders warned St. Patrick's visitors to behave, saying there will be "zero tolerance" after last year. **B1.**

Alleged clients of brothel in the spotlight

12 men are publicly identified, charged, but only 2 attend hearing

By Sean Cotter, Danny McDonald, and Nick Stoico
GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — After months of speculation and judicial rigmarole, some of the men accused of buying sex through a Cambridge-area brothel ring that operated out of luxury apartments were publicly identified in court on Friday.

The dozen men charged with allegedly paying for sex hail from disparate backgrounds. A twenty-something radiographer who grew up in Concord and works at a major Boston hospital. A Natick dentist. A software engineer from Waltham who is going through a divorce. A Winchester man in his mid-50s who has worked for a pharmaceutical giant.

In the 16 months since authorities dismantled the brothel ring and vowed accountability for the men who kept it running through payments of hundreds of dollars an hour for sex

BROTHELS, Page A10



JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

Survivors of the commercial sex industry (from left) Brittanie Adams, Audra Doody, Audrey Morrissey, and Stacy Reed watched a live broadcast of the proceedings Friday.

Boston Sunday Globe

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JUNE 1, 2025

Money comes to the fore in mayor's race

Record spending likely for fiery Boston contest

By Emma Platoff and Niki Griswold
GLOBE STAFF

There is no shortage of issues to debate in this year's Boston mayor's race: housing, schools, renovations to White Stadium, ever-controversial bike lanes.

But so far, the one that seems to be taking center stage is money — who's giving it, who's spending it, whose dad has a lot of it, and how much of it is funding attack ads.

An outside super PAC aligned with mayoral challenger Josh Kraft has announced it will spend at least $2.4 million on attack ads against Mayor Michelle Wu. And Kraft, a longtime nonprofit leader and the son of billionaire Patriots owner Robert Kraft, is loaning himself $2 million. These are just the latest developments in a race that has grown increasingly focused not just on campaign

CAMPAIGN, Page A6



MICHELLE WU

$919,000 raised so far for current campaign; reported raising $2.6 million in 2021



JOSH KRAFT

Loaned his campaign $2 million while outside PAC pledges $2.4 million in ads

Trump vs. Harvard fight gets personal

White House wants Garber out as school girds for long slog, changes

By Mike Damiano and Hilary Burns
GLOBE STAFF

Two months into their battle against Harvard, Trump officials are making clear the hits won't stop unless the most visible faces of the school's resistance are pushed out.

With talks between the government and the university irrevocably broken and President Trump using every weapon to inflict pain on the school, some administration aides are suggesting the two sides will not reach a resolution until there is "leadership change" at Harvard, federal officials said last week.

One Trump official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on behalf of the White House, said Harvard needs to remove its president, Alan Garber, and the school's senior board member, Penny Pritzker, if it hopes to negotiate a deal.

And on Thursday, White House spokesperson Harrison Fields criticized Garber for his

HARVARD, Page A13



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Becks Padrusch placed materials in an incubator at UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester.

The number of new NIH grant awards for early career researchers has, since the start of the year, plummeted by 43%.

LAB-GROWN PROMISES, BROKEN

Crucial to New England's future, young scientists are questioning career choices amid federal cuts

By Chris Serres
GLOBE STAFF
and J. Emory Parker
STAT

Becks Padrusch's fondest memories growing up were of trips to Boston's Museum of Science, where the Arlington native got to touch animal organs and watch with fascination as chickens hatched in incubators. As a toddler, Padrusch, who uses they/them pronouns, insisted on bedtime stories about the solar system and how the planets formed.

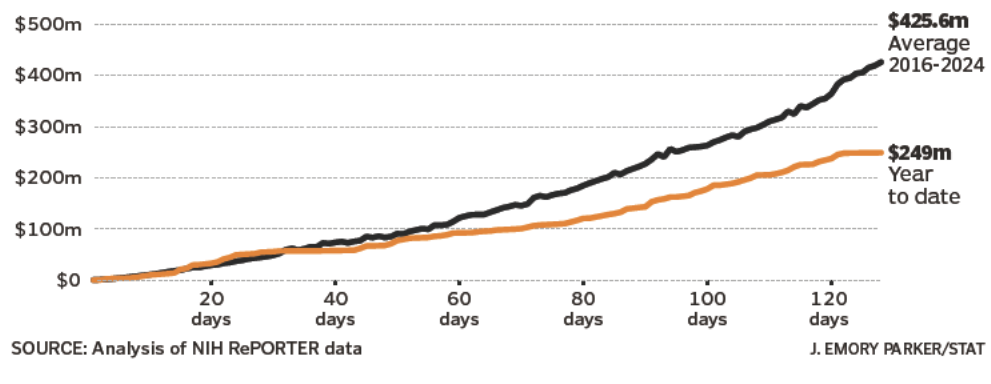
By age 5, Padrusch knew they wanted to be a scientist.

So Padrusch felt overjoyed when they received an offer to work at a UMass Chan Medical School genetics laboratory, studying how organisms evolve and react to molecules. "It felt like paradise," said Padrusch, a research associate at the Worcester lab. "I felt that same sense of wonder that I did as a child."

Now, amid massive cuts to scientific research, Padrusch feels those dreams slipping away. On May 2, their 26th birthday, a lab supervisor gently pulled Padrusch aside and suggested they look for other jobs because of the precarious path ahead for scientific research.

SCIENTISTS, Page A14

US has awarded $177 million less in early career grants so far this year



SOURCE: Analysis of NIH RePORTER data

J. EMORY PARKER/STAT

For stolen Dutch art, the clue was an $18 throw pillow

By Malcolm Gay
GLOBE STAFF

WORCESTER — On a balmy Wednesday in early May, Clifford Schorer arrived at the Worcester Art Museum in his 2012 Prius. A tall man with intense eyes, he fished a rectangular package from the rear of the car and bounded up the museum's new granite steps.

Schorer, a former president of the museum's board, is a brilliant, some would say brilliantly complex, aficionado, an international art dealer and sleuth who spends his days (and many nights) hunting "sleepers" — lost masterpieces whose true identities have been obscured through the ages.

Schorer had flown from Brussels the day before with the painting he now carried in his hands, a winter scene by the acclaimed Dutch Golden Age artist Hendrick Avercamp.

The artwork was stolen nearly half a century earlier in a sensational 1978 heist from the baronial estate of Helen and Robert Stoddard, a Worcester industrialist. The Avercamp picture,

PAINTING, Page A8



The Avercamp piece was reproduced on a pillow.

For decades, the chronically underfunded and crumbling MBTA resisted even modest fixes. Enter Phil Eng. **Globe Magazine.**

Local immigrant groups are reeling from the Supreme Court decision allowing President Trump to end, for now, a form of protection. **B1.**

Sunday, sun day

Sunday: Clouds and sun. High 64-69, low 50-55.

Monday: Lots of sun. High 68-73, low 54-59.

Complete report, **A22.**

Obituaries, **A21.**

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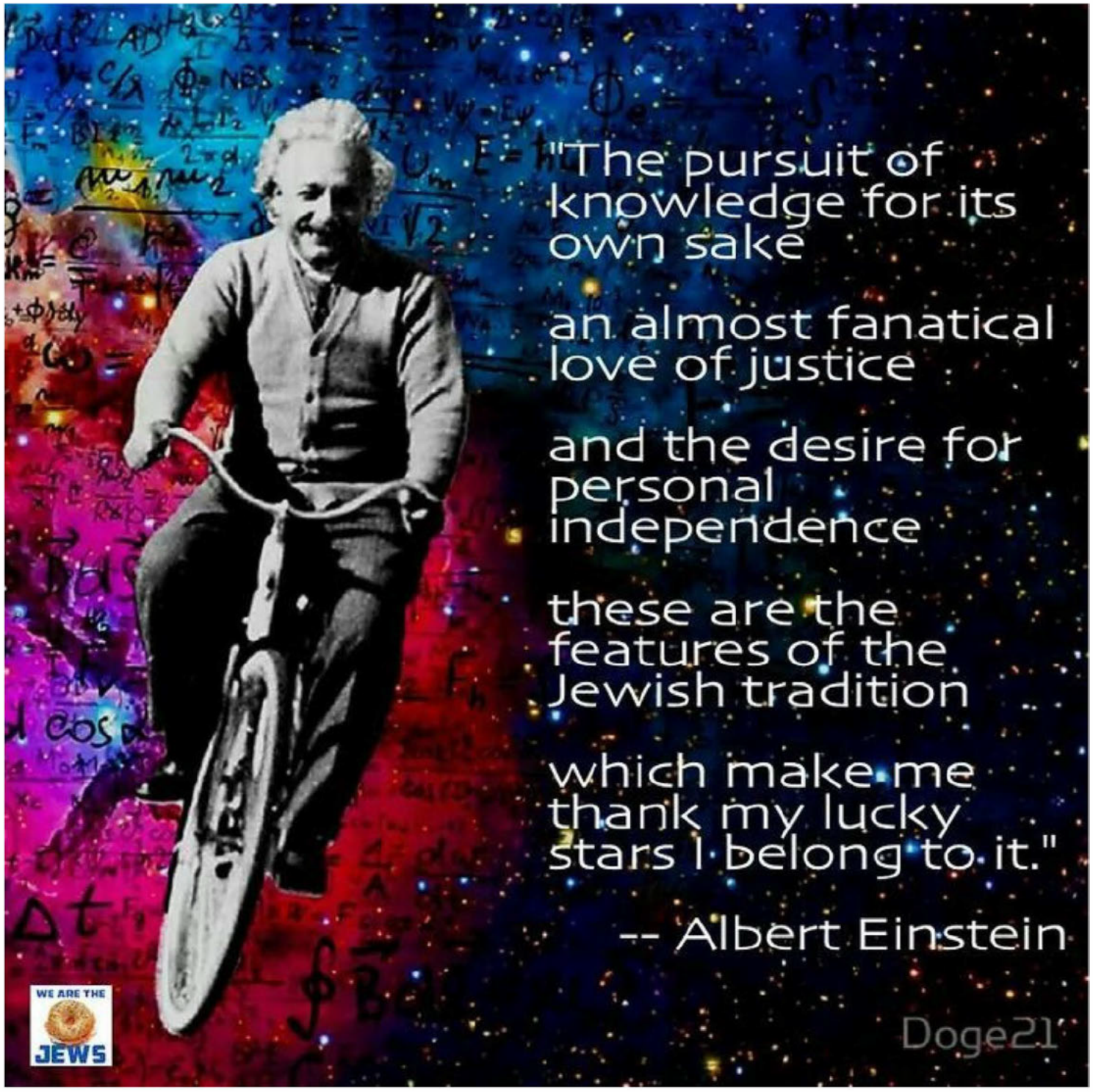
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Member FDIC


"The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake
an almost fanatical love of justice
and the desire for personal independence
these are the features of the Jewish tradition
which make me thank my lucky stars I belong to it."
-- Albert Einstein
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border
china
good
years
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laws
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wall
stock
massive
states
farmers

Marty Rosenthal, pct-9, long ago S Bd M, and **for PAX**– now **for A/C's Motion** (Th, May 5th 2025)

For this –EXISTENTIAL –issue, we (soon *ad nauseum*) BEG you to at least SKIM our Comb/Rpts (henceforth **"C/R's,"** some pages soon cited) --the Whereases, Explanation, and Supplements 1 and 3 and also PAX's May 27th emailed Warrant **"ADDENDUM."**

SLIDE 1, please, Michael DUKAKIS including about MCFG, our Appendix A.

Since we go first, I urge your "critical listening"**--** to both us **and** our Opponents. I'll try answering some of their *arguments*, like by **Brookline for Everyone (henceforth "B4E"),** who – for **obvious** reasons -- urge No Action.

I yesterday sent you 2023's WA18 Rollcall, 58 (I felt shockingly!) opposing ***any*** study, maybe *all* pro-city-ites -- some who'll speak tonight.

B4E says:

- MCFG offers a **BALANCED, EVIDENCE-BASED** examination. …
- 30 is a … offered by citizens who **believe** the report **is biased** …
- and … who want the work **RE-DONE**

"RE-DONE," is the LAST thing we want! See our Motion's "***AUGMENT***"

As for **"*balanced,*"** there's (in Art. 31 by **members** Gadsby & Goldstein (henceforth **"The Two Townies"**) a fabulous -- but incomplete -- **2½-pager**, expanding on Sandy's 2024 one with a single pro-Town paragraph that's a parenthetical addendum (Appendix B8, page 3).

Then there's one by FOUR pro-city members (henceforth **"The City Four"**), two being B4E'**ers** appointed by the former City Charter Campaign's Treasurer). It's **SEVEN**-pages, and the so-called "Research", many critiqued in our **two** Explanations

As for **"*evidence-based,*"** some (neutral) reports **do** have **"DATA,"** but NONE supports anything by The City Four. Their "evidence" is mostly **talking** to a few ad hoc, personally selected, & anonymous people, which Chair Berry once called "research."

Even **worse!**: The City Charter folk will promote **THAT** report as "Town-certified" or *authoritative*? Will Voters know its many flaws? (more on that later)

As for **"BIAS,"** yet again, please SKIM our Explanations, like Chair Berry's in 2024 on Voter Turnout C/R 30, pages 6-7. In a meeting he emphasized it, and Vice-Chair Donaher called it "not challengeable." Art 31 now ***buries*** it, not due to **our** rebuttal, but because it was later refuted by pro-city B4E'er Katherine Haenschen in Art. 31's)"Municipal Elections …") The Two Townies mention that, but it's ignored by The City Four. There's much more in our Explanation about Appendices 3-7, my two favs being C/R 30, 8-10, Chair Berry's **"Town Meeting a Culprit"** and **Lisa Shatz'** alleged Newton Councilor's POLL of Brookline folk.

Two roads diverge in your tonight's Existential forest: Do you just "take **our Opponents** (foregoing) word for it"? **OR, yet again**, spend **5-10 minutes** SKIMMING **BOTH** of our Explanations**???** After now six months and, yes, thousands of words, ***NOT a SINGLE specific criticism ever been addressed***. Court Evidence Rules call such SILENCE *Adoptive Admissions*"! Will anyone answer *any specifics* tonight?

We offer , yes, TMI, because we have no delusions that our mere "*credibility*" could "prove" either the specific flaws or the bias. And, as John Adams said, – "*facts are stubborn things*" – ~~OR, MY new t-shirt, "Facts Matter."~~ **[ordered last week from Globe, overnight mail not yet rec'd]**

John VanScoyoc graded Mcfg "A+" in Feb., after *only* three so-called "expert" guests who were **all** pro-city, with a fourth Ms. **Stone** imminent. He was grading Appendices B,1-8! Our TMI was **FOR YOU** to "*distrust and verify*" **those Reports.** John loves Yogi Berra's "You can observe a lot by just watching," – **AND also** by SKIMMING. The then-six pro-city reports ALL flunked "*a straight-face test.*"

~~Debby Goldberg's Dad, Avram, had mine for history in Latin School, and recalled him writing on a blackboard, "Marie Antionette caused the French Revolution," and assigning essays on that. After they did, he announced "everyone's flunked this lesson, namely 'Don't believe everything in quotes.'" [=44]~~

For Moderator Karon, I'm ignoring **Art.** 30's biggest issue, how drastic would be a city. But, *nobody* knows that better than *almost* all of you, each being a Whereas #1 "poster-child."

Now, the BALLOT PROCESS! The City Four say, "[A]n **elected Charter Commission** is the proper place to undertake a study." As 2023 Art. 18 Petitioner Jon Margolis today explained, that's wrong – **and dangerous**. How will Voters know enough about Commission candidates? Or, about all the complex *facts*, far more complex than, say, an override? Do YOU want ***drastic*** change by *gut feelings* and *sound-bites*, like "*We're too big for a Town*!"? The Ballot Law[1] gives Voters pro- con arguments of only 150 words. **B4E** knows that **developers'** *pro-city* **cash** will **gush** in! And, ballot Question campaigns lack contribution limits! (***Welcome to Brookline, Citizens United,* Step One***)*

Some mostly ignored issues that need "***AUGMENTING***": **FIRST**, except a speck by **The Two Townies,** mostly ignored was **half of** our Govnt, **the Executive Branch**. The City Four's report's entitled "*Case For Replacing* ***Town Meeting***." How about their mandate?

Then, **FOUR** big red herrings:

- Our govnt's **CONFUSING?** ► They say a "*DIZZYING ARRAY*" ► What's that mean? Are YOU folk *dizzy*? Are your *voters*? And, mainly, even if true, is it *worse than cities*? In Newton for a contested zoning variance -- like here -- you call city hall, get a Building Commissioner, and may need an (ugh!) lawyer. Dizzying?

  ~~That issue also highlights my earlier nothing's "evidence based" point. Unlike the League's 1988 study (Whereas 6) and Andover's that I sent to all yesterday, *where's Brookline's beef's "evidence"*? The "dizzying" canard's at most ostensibly supported by a single so-called "research" report, L Shatz's from talking to a few Newton Councilors, one who supposedly did a Brookline POLL. See **C/R page 30-8**. [63]~~

- Then "**TRANSPARENCY**"**?**: ► **Mayors** wheel & deal **behind closed doors!!** … **OUR** Leaders have the Open Meeting Law!

  - **SLIDE 2, please : then, "*ACCOUNTABILITY*"?:** ►Unlike S Bd M's, like yours truly, Mayors are almost NEVER un-seated (Boston since 1949, & Newton since 1997)

  - **Relatedly,** only The Two Townies discuss :"**CONCENTRATED POWER**" and **CAMPAIGN CASH** -- but **only** for **TMM's.** How about **Mayors** getting **developers'** money? **SLIDE 3, please**. Like now in Boston! In 2022 Wu & her opponent each spent **$2.5 million**. Divide it by 10, & you have Newton Mayors' -- about $**250,000**. ***Citizens United -- Welcome FOREVER!***

[1] c.53, §18B(d)

- And, they omit **MAYORS' Concentrated Power,** versus our (**great**) **Checks & Balances**.

~~**A/C's version** is basically silly- especially their "chilling effect"; and is counterproductive, How can you "*augment*" a study without looking at it? P.S., Prof. Berry **asks T/Mtg to "EVALUATE our work"!**[2] **[=33**~~

Finally, last night the **S-Bd, by Paul Warren, did a 180° reversal** of its earlier 3-1-1 support for the Art. 30, basically Resolved #5 – when *everyone knew Mcfg would dissolve*. I heard his explanation last night. It's far more indecipherable than *my writing*. I await it tonight!

SLIDE 4, please, **Einstein's** "Pursuit of Knowledge"[3] Study Opponents evoke to me the 1850's **Know Nothings**. Our Referral Explanation says: "**W30 was/is NOT is about the MCFG.** *Referral* seems, prospectively, a **no-brainer** – **for the "VOTERS"!**

So, why not *AUGMENT* the Report? **More** can be– here **is** – **better**, even **needed**!

We say MCFG didn't "*Do its Job.*" B4E says they did. Please *do YOURS – for those **Voters**!*

2 **WA31** "[W]e want you,[TMM's] to read our work and evaluate it yourself." (emphasis added)

[3] **EINSTEIN**: " The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, an almost fanatical love of justice, and the desire for personal independence—these are the features of the Jewish tradition which make me thank my stars that I belong to it

Brookline PAX
think globally • act locally

ADDENDUM TO PAX WA RECOMMENDATIONS

Neil's Sunday emailed (& attached) PAX WA recommendations are great summaries of our Board's votes. But in rushing to finalize them, we were distracted by two things (1) USA's descent into hateful, corrupt, oligarchical, plutocratic, neo-autocracy,[1] and (2) our very "local"[2] WA30 re the proposed existential threat to our very good/successful Form of Government. So, two biggies got too short shrift:

I. WA9, Budget Amendment Trashing Privatization: (A) First, re Sunday's "Yes, we will likely see an override ballot question in May '26,… [and while] our Select Board, [A/C], School Committee, and many staff members have done a great job balancing the budget," please remember that this is a two-fold nationwide, statewide, crisis – both (1) dependence on regressive taxes due to US' plutocratic (*supra*) domination, and (2) lack of appreciation for "government" -- from R. Reagan to Trump-Musk.

(B)(1) Re the **BUDGET AMENDMENT** opposing the *privatization* of trash collection , as mentioned Sunday, attachd, PAX has long opposed that, which needs local affirmation of our core values – in the face of the aforementioned USA degradations. In fact, this has a local déjà vu, smack-dab in Reagan's heyday, by the now-thankfully-deceased *Brookline Civic Association*, which took over our Select Board in 1988 – primarily to end rent-control. So, not only is the Amendment "good government" and good values, but an important "Statement." As the Amend-ors say (Supplmt 3, p3), emphasis added:

> The proposed amendment provides DPW with a full fiscal year to design and implement ... More importantly, it gives the Town a *window to collaborate with union representatives* and frontline workers to build a policy that is fair, effective, and sustainable. This measured approach stands in stark contrast to the irrevocable consequences of outsourcing."

(2) And, we've (www.BrooklinePAX.org, "about") long appreciated all our Town's public ("servant") employees, and all our government officials (e.g. you TMM's), in part due to (under OML) *Transparency* and direct *Accountability* (not remote, behind *private* closed doors). We also appreciate the sincere "management" *motives* of our (again, great) officials proposing this change. But, very respectfully to them, there are less drastic ways to address some of the management issues – like by collective bargaining.

(3) finally, like WA30 (*infra*), we urge a high "burden of proof" for major changes: If in doubt, don't put at risk some important values! See by TMM & ACM *Anthony Buono*, who'll also speaking for PAX:

> There are instances where private contractors offer efficiencies or economies of scale. The [DPW proposal] does not offer substantive efficiencies or limit costs. [So, t]his is not one of those times. If we were saving… good sums of money and improving service, then the contract would have my support. The truth is, it doesn't.

II. WA30, Support Referral (of subject matter to new committee appointed by S-Bd, to "*review, evaluate, & further augment*" MCFG's work, "the *pursuit of knowledge for its own sake*" (Einstein):[3]

As per Comb/Rpts WA30 Supplements 1 & 3,[4] attached/accompanying this, Petitioners filed the foregoing, with (sorry) another six-page *Explanation* updating many developments since WA30's filing, and to address some recent A/C Subcommittee confusion/*mishigas*[5] -- e.g.:

- Apr. 9th (after 15 mos.) finally having 2 *pro-town* guest advocates – obviously *too little too late*;

---

[1] We thank PAX'rs who organized, & all who joined, our Saturday rallies, echoing a decade ago re Shrub's WMD/Iraq War
[2] *Supra*, PAX's motto since 1962 -- re global/local.
[3] "*The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake*, an almost fanatical love of justice, and the desire for personal independence—these are features of the Jewish tradition which make me thank my lucky stars that I belong to it." (emphasis added)
[4] seemingly missing a Supplement 2
[5] See Referral Motion's Explanation, *Conclusion*

- Re WA31 reports,[6] **(1)** *finally* a *3-page* **S.Gadsby/DM.Goldstein's** *pro-town* one, excellent but incomplete, **(2)** counter-"balanced" [sic] by **(a)** the *four* assiduously pro-city members' *7-page* conclusory, downright (sorry) silly report, and **(b)** ~ 86 pp (by individual members), almost all (except S. Gadsby's from 2024, App. B8) either impractical (e.g. Prof. Lessig's otherwise great ones, but good for a new committee), or mostly similarly flawed -- *NOT* objective, fair, fact- or evidence-based, and assiduously *ignoring* BOTH most of the pros/cons of the two main Forms of Government, AND much about both our Executive Branch and Town's innumerable *successes;*
- And they ignore the **Ballot process'** hidden flaws, for the Voters an 800-pound FoG gorilla, cf. pro-city-ites like Brookline for Everyone, *infra*, offering in essence deceptive assumptions like "Let a Charter Commission study everything, and what's the harm of that?")

And, of course, lots more. NOW, though, the full A/C has thankfully circumvented its (4-0) subcommittee's *No Action* recommendation, and ultimately (overwhelmingly[7]) supported a referral, BUT with an unnecessarily **competing (A/C) Motion**. While it's, yes, not major, it's factually unfounded and counterproductive. After a (justifiably) harsh MCFG critique by its (and A/C's) member David-Marc Goldstein, he persuaded the full A/C that the words "***review***" and "***evaluate*****"** are too negative or harsh; and A/C now *moves to drop them*. In spite of Petitioners' stated intent (C/R Suppl't #3) that "*WA30 was/is NOT about the MCFG members, [it] was -- still is – for the "**Voters,"*** that **Substitute Motion** g*oes too far*. Like TM's 2023 WA18, even the full MCFG's full committee (largely procedural) Report said, "[W]e want you,[TMM's] to read our work and ***evaluate*** it yourself." (emphasis added)"[8]

Now, two more updates: We also forgot to mention a spot-on May 5th critique by two EDAB members (and TMM's) about Prof Berry's "Comparing :Legislatures and Economic Development"

> This 14-page research report purports to provide an analysis of economic development capacity and leadership in Brookline, primarily in comparison to Newton; however, the report leaves out many essential details which would create a clearer understanding of [our] development climate and approvals process for development …

And, thankfully, *Brookline for Everyone* has outed itself as ardent city-ites, e.g., their two activists (half of MCFG's pro-city majority) whom Moderator Wishinsky, former City Charter Campaign Treasurer, put on last summer when TMM Elizabeth Childs had to resign. They say, *and ask yourself **WHY**?*:[9]

- [MCFG] *carried out its charge* … offer[ing] a *balanced, evidence-based* examination of the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of government. …
- WA30 is … by citizens who *believe* the report is *biased* toward one perspective
- and are thus proposing that the Committee's work *be redone*

The blatant falsity of the third ("redone") is obvious merely from the Motion's language (*supra*). Also obvious is both MCFG's monumental *bias*, and that almost (maybe) all B4E leaders, like those of City Charter Campaign, voted *against* 2023 WA18, essentially then – and now urging, "*See no evil [developers], hear no evil [facts], just pretend the ballot process is plenty*." Not! WA30 *should* be a "*no-brainer*," as lawyers say, "*res ipsa loquitur*," or again (John Adams) "facts are stubborn things." Please don't rely on "gut-feelings" or "who sounds smarter/nicer?" For this existential Brookline issue – PLEASE at ***least skim WA30's many pages!*** (See also Einstein, *supra* & fn.3.)

---

[6] (1) Again see new Explanation; & (2) Re the 8 earlier (12 mos') reports, see WA30 Explanation. Maybe the silliest, WA30's *App B3*, Prof. Berry's re Voter Turnout, has now been *buried*, likely because later contradicted by Katherine Haenschen

[7] Opposed by mostly ardent city advocates, most of whom – at the time, astonishingly – had voted NO on 2023's WA18!

[8] As we said to S-Bd 4/15/25 before their 3-1-1 vote for original WA30, "WA30 has TMI for most people, so I'll just highlight a few points: (a) Very respectfully, MCFG's 4-person majority, wrongly augmented by Neil [W], our otherwise great Moderator, has been a 14-month *Perfect Storm of Unconscious Bias*, also with *Stockholm Syndrom*e by its 3 (Herculean) pro-Town members -- who, super-respectfully for 12 months were too collegial to that Storm, e.g. with no report critiques until recently

[9] (emphases added, ellipses deleted) See WA30 Explanations re cities' *Campaign $*, & lack of *Accountability* & *Transparency*

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Cc: Edith Brickman
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Some good news
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 4:05:38 PM

Edie Brickman, our old friend and long time Town Meeting colleague had a wonderful experience with Rami's restaurant, Andrew's Catering, and the Butcherie.
John Bassett
p6

This is the story of my experience with three of the many wonderful businesses in Brookline, Rami's. Andrew's Catering and the Butcherie who showed so much kindness to a young woman student from Kuwait.

A few years ago, I took a seven-week course on the Middle East Accords. One of the students, Nadia, came from Kuwait. After five weeks, even though she wore traditional Muslim clothing including a Hijab I could see her face was becoming gaunt. I asked her if she was OK. She said that she was not eating very much. She continued to say that she only had a choice of fruits, vegetables and fish. She did not like to eat fish so was losing weight. She said that her family was concerned about her safety and did not want her to leave the Campus.

At that time, I did not know of any restaurants or grocery stores that had Halal food. Hillel was closed for the summer. From past experience, I knew Muslims could eat kosher food. I suggested we go to Brookline for food she could eat. With trepidation she agreed. She was aware she needed to eat more food.

The next day after class we were off to Brookline.

First, we went to Rami's for lunch. I think it may have been the owner, Rami, who spoke to Nadia in Arabic. I could see Nadia's tension ease and she loved the food.

Next, we went to Andrew's Catering. It was Friday and for Shabbat they had individual meals to go. The woman who helped Nadia was very kind and helped her chose the meals.

Then we went to the Butcherie. One of the shoppers came over to us when he saw that we were overwhelmed by the selection. He explained the difference between Ashkenazi and Sephardic food. Then the owner joined us. He told Nadia that she would like the Sephardic products. The two men accompanied Nadia around the store filling up her cart. I was just an observer.

Nadia asked me what she could do for me. I told her that when she called her parents she tell them the kindness and caring of the Brookline Jewish Community, and that is what Nadia did.

The moral of this experience is caring and kindness is powerful.

YES TO BREAKING BREAD TOGETHER

NO TO BREAKING GLASS

Edie Brickman

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: moghtader4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 4:46:35 PM

Thank you for this conversation, and Sarah for highlighting the importance of addressing emotional health and well being such as was highlighted by WA 21, which will be incorporated into the town's Community Health Improvement Plan implementation.

I also want to bring to your attention a terrific presentation from theTown's (DPH) substance use prevention coordinator and the regional tobacco control person (I am sure I have the titles not exactly right) that took place at the meeting of the Advisory Council of Public Health this past Monday (6/16) The link to the video of that presentation is https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/O8Sf-mweZ84_65hztzxoCQMb0SLUfIyjPzba492N7VG2Ze-kUsu_zbT_H_VMy9dW.-tQTnDnIhtT1eCWW, with the relevant part of the meeting starting at around 18:00. It is a comprehensive look at the wonderful work that is being done now with some discussion of future plans. There is a lot going on, with a lot of excellent coordination underway.

-Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council of Public Health

On Sat, Jun 21, 2025 at 4:55 PM Sarah Moghtader via groups.io <moghtader4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Hi Susan,
>
> (This message was edited from one posted earlier.)
>
> Thank you for starting this conversation and for the link to the article above. There is reference for the need of an Ad campaign against abusing drugs as well as a suggestion to support legislation to regulate high potency marijuana. I am a supporter of such regulation. I understand that a campaign can have its merits, I am just a realist when it comes to kids. The kids who need to hear the message that smoking, vaping or consuming edible THC is a mental health risk are not the ones who will be reached by ad campaigns.
>
> The type of marijuana that is being sold to youth is very different from the weed that my generation knew (not to make me sound like I am 100 years old!), so as parents we should all inform ourselves. And, as happens with lobbyists for many issues, the money that the marijuana industry is putting up to fight this regulation is harming kids.
>
> Good idea on your part, Susan, to call attention to this issue and to ask your fellow TMMs to support a bill. Does anyone know what can be done here locally?
>
> Best,

> Sarah

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sarah Moghtader via groups.io <moghtader4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 6:04:45 PM

Thank you, Charlie. The meeting is evidence of great coordination. It was uplifting to hear.

I am wondering why we didn't hear anything about high potency marijuana, which was one of the points made by the Town Meeting members at the top of this thread.

Does anyone know if under-age Brookline residents are or are not using high potency marijuana? Is the issue raised by our fellow Town Meeting members not a local issue?

I want to highlight for parents that when you read about marijuana use in youth, that the youth who are most likely to view weed positively are the children of parents who use, for what it's worth.

Thank you,
Sarah

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io>
To: listserv TMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 7:13:31 PM

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Colleagues – The Centre Street Lots Exploratory Study has created what they call a "parklet" in the main (East) parking lot, with outdoor folding chairs, bean bag games, chalk for drawing, and potted and hanging plants. I think this is to gauge public sentiment for this kind of use. I'd like to call TM's attention to another aspect of the parklet that's less obvious.

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I've been informed by the DPW that, town wide, depending upon the location and usage of the parking meter, a parking meter can be expected to bring in revenue from a low of $3.72/meter/day - $10.33/meter/day. The arithmetical average of that is $7.025/meter/day. (I strongly suspect that the Centre St. East parking lot would bring in more revenue per meter because the lot serves Brookline's biggest commercial area and includes destinations like Booksmith and the Theater, but for purposes of this posting I'll go with the arithmetical average).

Using the arithmetical average, for 21 days each of parklet's parking spaces would be expected to produce about $147.525 of revenue for the Town. (That's, $7.025/meter/day x 21 metered days from June 3 – 27 = $147.525).

There are 5 parking spaces in the parklet, so, in the aggregate the 5 parking spaces would be expected to produce about $737.625 for the 21 days that the parklet is in operation. (That's $147.525 x 5 spaces = $737.625). It would seem, therefore, that taking the 5 spaces off duty from metering for the parklet is costing the town about $737.62 in lost revenue.

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Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc: listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 7:22:21 PM

I just got home from seeing a movie at Coolidge Corner Cinema where there was nearly a riot over the paucity of parking in the Center Street lot. Cars were gridlocked waiting for spaces to open up, lots of honking and short tempers.
Just sayin.
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14
PS
The movie was "Bad Shabbos" and was hilarious.

On Jun 22, 2025, at 7:13 PM, Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 8:04:54 PM

Bad Shabbos was an amazing movie! My roomate's cousin wrote and directed it! I'm so glad you liked it, I encourage everyone else to go see it!

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025 at 7:22 PM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc: listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 8:36:20 PM

This is a ludicrous idea. We are already short of parking in Brookline's main shopping area. Stop playing games and fix the parking problem
Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025 at 7:13 PM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Report This Email
>
> Colleagues – The Centre Street Lots Exploratory Study has created what they call a "parklet" in the main (East) parking lot, with outdoor folding chairs, bean bag games, chalk for drawing, and potted and hanging plants. I think this is to gauge public sentiment for this kind of use. I'd like to call TM's attention to another aspect of the parklet that's less obvious.
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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Katherine Haenschen via groups.io <keh303=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc: listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 8:47:47 PM

Thanks for letting us know about the parklet, Jonathan! I, for one, am glad that Brookline is exploring the many ways in which people can enjoy our outdoor spaces rather than prioritizing the storage of cars.

I would encourage all of you to think about the many ways in which the different people in Brookline have different needs for public and outdoor spaces.

I look forward to visiting it with my two children when we are not in our 1007 square-foot apartment that lacks a deeded yard or outdoor space. If any other park enthusiasts and/or parents of young children in Town Meeting would like to join me there for a picnic this week, please reply to me off-list and we can set a date.

Cheers,
Katherine Haenschen
TMM, Pct 17

On Sun, 22 Jun 2025 at 7:13 pm, Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Report This Email
>
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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Maxim Sheinin via groups.io <max4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc: listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:04:30 PM

Dear Jonathan,

Thank you for this interesting analysis. You're implicitly assuming that people trying to park in the spaces temporarily occupied by the parklet will instead drive away and not park at all. However we know that there's parking availability both in the Centre Street Lot as well as in adjacent areas (https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/54428/Coolidge-Corner-Parking-Study-Final-Report), so the result will be just a redistribution of occupied parking spots and associated metered parking revenue, with no net impact on revenue for the duration of the study.

I personally applaud the Town staff for setting up this exploratory study - conducting small-scale, time-bound experiments is a great way to gather data to inform decision-making that will have greater and longer-term impact.

Thank you,
Maxim Sheinin
TMM, Pct. 6

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025 at 7:13 PM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Report This Email
>
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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Matthew Caldeira via groups.io <matthew.caldeira=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: chillman96@gmail.com
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:24:41 PM

I agree. Parking /lack there of is a variable that can increase or decrease businesses' revenue; i.e. lack there of discourages potential customers from coming to a specific area to spend money.
Seems the consensus is to generate more commerce; as that's what needed (?).
There are already quite a few parks in the area: Amory(the one diagonally across), Griggs, behind Ridley school, the one off Kenwood, top of summit Ave, Dean st, triangle Green on park st, playground next to zaftigs...

I can't imagine people wanting to take their families to a parklet in a busy paved parking lot.

Must also be some level of danger risk with all the cars coming and going in that lot... a bean bag gets tossed too far... in the main pathway of cars driving around....

Why not use Ridley green for this?

What should happen is build a parking garage in the main lot (build up 2 levels, so.3 levels total, and use lot across the street (one that farmer's market uses) for a small park/parklet... Parking garage can capitalize on revenue for day business and for overnight parking.

Cheers.
Matthew Caldeira TMM-9

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025, 8:36 PM Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> This is a ludicrous idea. We are already short of parking in Brookline's main shopping area. Stop playing games and fix the parking problem
> Carol Hillman
> TMM pct 1
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> chillman96@gmail.com
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> Jonathan Davis
>
> TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Fran Perler via groups.io <Fran.Pct8=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:43:21 PM

Hi all,

I suggest everyone forward their emails to Zach Tesler, staff person for the Centre St Parking Lot Committee, since they don't necessarily have access to the TMM list server.

Zachary Tesler

Economic Development & Long-Term Planner
ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Phone: 617-730-2124

Although the CC parking study identified many empty parking spaces, most of those were on private property not accessible to the public or at the more expensive private lots. They found surrounding streets were usually quite full, as was the Centre St lots, but the Babcock St lot was less crowded. Please read the full report.

Take care,
Fran Perler
Precinct 8 TMM
Advisory Committee

Council on Aging, Citizen Member
Friends of Hall Pond, Board Member
……
Sent from Fran's iPad. Language errors courtesy of autocorrect.

On Jun 22, 2025, at 7:22 PM, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I just got home from seeing a movie at Coolidge Corner Cinema where there was nearly a riot over the paucity of parking in the Center Street lot. Cars were gridlocked waiting for spaces to open up, lots of honking and short tempers.
Just sayin.
Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14
PS
The movie was "Bad Shabbos" and was hilarious.

> On Jun 22, 2025, at 7:13 PM, Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

Report This Email

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I've been informed by the DPW that, town wide, depending upon the location and usage of the parking meter, a parking meter can be expected to bring in revenue from a low of $3.72/meter/day - $10.33/meter/day. The arithmetical average of that is $7.025/meter/day. (I strongly suspect that the Centre St. East parking lot would bring in more revenue per meter because the lot serves Brookline's biggest commercial area and includes destinations like Booksmith and the Theater, but for purposes of this posting I'll go with the arithmetical average).

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Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Susan Park via groups.io <susanforbrookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: moghtader4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:57:41 PM

Thank you Sarah for your emails and your care and concern for our youth!

You are exactly right. Many students do indeed get their marijuana from their parents cabinets, and we can connect the dots that the marijuana sold today is much higher than it used to be which is dangerous for our youth as mentioned in this string of emails and the links below. It would be great to work together and support our Brookline young people with the growing concerns regarding marijuana use, psychosis, and addiction bc we know that nothing changes if nothing changes, and the data is frightening.

https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/04/us/cannabis-marijuana-risks-addiction.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare

https://www.bu.edu/articles/2025/thc-content-in-cannabis-has-surged/

Am happy to support this important work.
Susan Park
TMM17

On Sun, 22 Jun 2025 at 6:04 PM Sarah Moghtader via groups.io <moghtader4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Thank you, Charlie. The meeting is evidence of great coordination. It was uplifting to hear.
>
> I am wondering why we didn't hear anything about high potency marijuana, which was one of the points made by the Town Meeting members at the top of this thread.
>
> Does anyone know if under-age Brookline residents are or are not using high potency marijuana? Is the issue raised by our fellow Town Meeting members not a local issue?
>
> I want to highlight for parents that when you read about marijuana use in youth, that the youth who are most likely to view weed positively are the children of parents who use, for what it's worth.
>
> Thank you,
> Sarah

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 11:57:33 PM

Unfortunately there are some people who are ideologically opposed to the use of cars and think they can get people to give up cars by making it difficult to drive and own one.

On 6/22/2025 8:36 PM, Carol hillman via groups.io wrote:

> This is a ludicrous idea. We are already short of parking in Brookline's main shopping area. Stop playing games and fix the parking problem
> Carol Hillman
> TMM pct 1
>
> chillman96@gmail.com
> 287 Kent St., Apt. 2
> Brookline, MA 02446
> 617-513-9384
>
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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Cc: "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 8:14:44 AM

>> Unfortunately there are some people who are ideologically opposed to the use of cars and think they can get people to give up cars by making it difficult to drive and own one.<<

Fortunately, there are some people who view public space as a precious, limited resource, and are willing to ponder uses for that space beyond the movement and storage of cars, including making it easier to not own one.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Joe Ross via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2025 11:57 PM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

Unfortunately there are some people who are ideologically opposed to the use of cars and think they can get people to give up cars by making it difficult to drive and own one.

On 6/22/2025 8:36 PM, Carol hillman via groups.io wrote:

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> Carol Hillman
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> chillman96@gmail.com
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> On Sun, Jun 22, 2025 at 7:13 PM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

Report This Email

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Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com
Cc: "listserv TMMA"; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 8:23:50 AM

>>Parking /lack there of is a variable that can increase or decrease businesses' revenue; i.e. lack there of discourages potential customers from coming to a specific area to spend money. <<

Somehow that case is never mentioned by the businesses seeking to convert parking spaces to outdoor restaurant seating.

>>There are already quite a few parks in the area: Amory(the one diagonally across), Griggs, behind Ridley school, the one off Kenwood, top of summit Ave, Dean st, triangle Green on park st, playground next to zaftigs... <<

I can only imagine the number of (free) parking spaces that we'd pass walking from the Centre Street lot to any of the mentioned parks.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Matthew Caldeira via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:24 PM
To: chillman96@gmail.com
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

I agree. Parking /lack there of is a variable that can increase or decrease businesses' revenue; i.e. lack there of discourages potential customers from coming to a specific area to spend money.
Seems the consensus is to generate more commerce; as that's what needed (?).
There are already quite a few parks in the area: Amory(the one diagonally across), Griggs, behind Ridley school, the one off Kenwood, top of summit Ave, Dean st, triangle Green on park st, playground next to zaftigs...

I can't imagine people wanting to take their families to a parklet in a busy paved parking lot.

Must also be some level of danger risk with all the cars coming and going in that

lot... a bean bag gets tossed too far... in the main pathway of cars driving around....

Why not use Ridley green for this?

What should happen is build a parking garage in the main lot (build up 2 levels, so.3 levels total, and use lot across the street (one that farmer's market uses) for a small park/parklet...
Parking garage can capitalize on revenue for day business and for overnight parking.

Cheers.
Matthew Caldeira TMM-9

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025, 8:36 PM Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; "listserv TMMA"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 8:30:58 AM

>>It would seem, therefore, that taking the 5 spaces off duty from metering for the parklet is costing the town about $737.62 in lost revenue.<<

That presumes there's no other reasonably available space. If the Coolidge never sold out, then removing a seat wouldn't hurt their top line, regardless of the average revenue per seat.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Davis via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2025 7:13 PM
To: listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 8:46:03 AM

Calling it a parklet doesn't make it green. Sitting in the middle of a parking lot isn't for most folks. Nothing to do with Coolidge selling out. Shoppers need a place to park
Revenue from list purchase and taxes should be factored in as well
Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 8:30 AM Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >>It would seem, therefore, that taking the 5 spaces off duty from metering for the parklet is costing the town about $737.62 in lost revenue.<<
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> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Davis via groups.io
> **Sent:** Sunday, June 22, 2025 7:13 PM
> **To:** listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>

Subject: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

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Colleagues – The Centre Street Lots Exploratory Study has created what they call a "parklet" in the main (East) parking lot, with outdoor folding chairs, bean bag games, chalk for drawing, and potted and hanging plants. I think this is to gauge public sentiment for this kind of use. I'd like to call TM's attention to another aspect of the parklet that's less obvious.

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Using the arithmetical average, for 21 days each of parklet's parking spaces would be expected to produce about $147.525 of revenue for the Town. (That's, $7.025/meter/day x 21 metered days from June 3 – 27 = $147.525).

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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: max4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 9:08:39 AM

At many times during the day parking in the center st lot is at best an ordeal. At worst non existent. Your assertions don't pass the reality test

Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

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TMM Pct. 17

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To: max4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 10:21:36 AM

Hello Maxim – thank you for your observation.

I think it's possible that people may drive around to find other parking spaces in walkable distance; but I think it's also possible that after a few experiences of not finding convenient parking they may reduce their patronage.

But, the bigger problem in my mind is not 5 spaces themselves but (a) the point that whatever square footage is changed into something other than parking may have a revenue cost to the town that should be acknowledged, and (b) if the square footage is enlarged (supposed all of the lot? Or suppose a quarter of the lot? Or half of the lot?) then the likelihood of drivers being unable to find convenient alternative parking, or choosing to find other venues for shopping – and the foregone town revenue – become worth considering.

Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

PS - Incidentally, I think the choice of the particular 5 spaces for the parklet is problematic because they eliminate the most convenient non-handicapped parking for several stores on Beacon Street.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Maxim Sheinin via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:04 PM
To: Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>
Cc: listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

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Maxim Sheinin
TMM, Pct. 6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Karon via groups.io <jakaronlaw=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: chillman96@gmail.com
Cc: max4brookline@gmail.com; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 10:22:24 AM

It seems to me the biggest issue isn't the revenue but whether we have sufficient parking for our commercial areas. I can speak from experience that at least on Saturdays and Sundays, it can be a problem. When the weather is nice and I don't have a lot to carry-i.e. not grocery shopping at Trader Joe's, I frequently enjoy walking. But, that's not an option that works for everyone and not for me at all times. Jon Karon TMM 12

Jonathan A. Karon
Karon Law, LLC
10 High Street, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 405-3200
jakaron@karonlaw.net
www.karonlaw.net

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 9:08 AM Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Lescohier via groups.io <david=lescohier.com@groups.io>
To: chillman96@gmail.com; Carol hillman via groups.io; max4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 10:51:54 AM

Hello,

This thread could be feedback for the Center Street Committee.

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It shouldn't either or. It's not easy.

However, the needs of shoppers and visitors and the opportunity to figure out how to introduce other amenities must be reconciled.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

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TMM Pct. 17

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io>
To:	david@lescohier.com; chillman96@gmail.com; Carol hillman via groups.io; max4brookline@gmail.com
Cc:	listserv TMMA
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 10:57:47 AM

Hi David – I'd like to emphasize what I hoped was the point of my positing: that is, that the parking spaces are revenue generators for the town, and as we know from our budget debate revenue sources shouldn't be left out of the discussion.

Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** David Lescohier via groups.io
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 10:52 AM
To: chillman96@gmail.com; Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io>; max4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>; listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
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Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sarah Moghtader via groups.io <moghtader4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Cannabis crisis: Psychosis and addiction impacting Mass. teens and young adults
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 1:37:04 PM

Hi All,

So now I understand more about youth use of marijuana. I guess that pens and cartridges are making it easier and more convenient to get high. In addition, pot today is more potent. Furthermore, health care professionals are seeing more Cannabis Use Disorder, which is starting to convince the public that marijuana is addictive.

I am not sure of the relationship between weed that is sold at dispensaries and youth use in our community. It might be that youth would be safer if they were consuming pot from regulated dispensaries. If anyone knows more about this, I would love to chat.

The 2023 Marijuana Landscape Assessment suggests at the end that youth would benefit from more collaboration between mental health services and other youth services. I hope that those who are committed to healthy youth really do see the need for the resolution that came out of Article 21 on Thriving Youth. Further suggestions at the community level are to continue to support the work of our town's substance abuse efforts.

At this moment, I am more determined than ever before to bring together our different town agencies to collaborate on youth goals. At the same time, as a parent, I am thankful that I have informed myself so that I can know how my own actions impact my kids and so that I can tell my kids of the connection between daily marijuana use and psychosis. I would urge all parents to read the articles linked in the above thread.

Best,
Sarah

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc: max4brookline@gmail.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 1:50:41 PM

Can anyone explain why the handicap spots directly in front of the Coolidge Threatre were replaced with barriers?

So much at the "new" Coolidge is user -unfriendly for seniors, including the design of the new section. Many seniors complain, and some, with mobility issues find it too exhausting to navigate to the two new theaters in the new section. Also, the new elevators are sometime "down" and seniors are told to use the stairs or go clear across the building to the old section. However, THAT elevator is also iffy, and on one occasion, both were not working. I had to leave (as I was using a cane at the time) and asked for m y money back, as I had just paid. The staff refused and said it was a new policy not to give refunds, only passes.

I returned for the first time in many, many months (I used to have memberships) recently, and saw the parking spots gone.

Young people must be designing everything, and have no understanding about the needs of seniors.

Regina Frawley 16

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 10:21 AM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Hello Maxim – thank you for your observation.
>
> I think it's possible that people may drive around to find other parking spaces in walkable distance; but I think it's also possible that after a few experiences of not finding convenient parking they may reduce their patronage.
>
> But, the bigger problem in my mind is not 5 spaces themselves but (a) the point that whatever square footage is changed into something other than parking may have a revenue cost to the town that should be acknowledged, and (b) if the square footage is enlarged (supposed all of the lot? Or suppose a quarter of the lot? Or half of the lot?) then the likelihood of drivers being unable to find convenient alternative parking, or choosing to find other venues for shopping – and the foregone town revenue – become worth considering.
>
> Jonathan Davis
>
> TMM Pct. 17

PS - Incidentally, I think the choice of the particular 5 spaces for the parklet is problematic because they eliminate the most convenient non-handicapped parking for several stores on Beacon Street.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Maxim Sheinin via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:04 PM
To: Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>
Cc: listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

Dear Jonathan,

Thank you for this interesting analysis. You're implicitly assuming that people trying to park in the spaces temporarily occupied by the parklet will instead drive away and not park at all. However we know that there's parking availability both in the Centre Street Lot as well as in adjacent areas (https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/54428/Coolidge-Corner-Parking-Study-Final-Report), so the result will be just a redistribution of occupied parking spots and associated metered parking revenue, with no net impact on revenue for the duration of the study.

I personally applaud the Town staff for setting up this exploratory study - conducting small-scale, time-bound experiments is a great way to gather data to inform decision-making that will have greater and longer-term impact.

Thank you,

Maxim Sheinin

TMM, Pct. 6

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025 at 7:13 PM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-

lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

Report This Email

Colleagues – The Centre Street Lots Exploratory Study has created what they call a "parklet" in the main (East) parking lot, with outdoor folding chairs, bean bag games, chalk for drawing, and potted and hanging plants. I think this is to gauge public sentiment for this kind of use. I'd like to call TM's attention to another aspect of the parklet that's less obvious.

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> Jonathan Davis
>
> TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com
Cc: Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:24:15 PM

Matthew — I could agree with the idea of a 2-3 level parking garage to meet the parking needs of Coolidge Corner business, and nearby residents for overnight parking, but suggest we think bigger. We have multiple challenges and needs, especially more housing for people at all income levels. The Centre street lot is a prime asset of the Town. How about putting the parking underground with 6 or 7 stories of mixed-income housing above it? It's time to think outside the box.

Carol — you said: "We are already short of parking in Brookline's main shopping area. Stop playing games and fix the parking problem." I don't disagree, but think we need to add: "We are already short of HOUSING in Brookline's incredibly convenient, walkable, and transit-friendly central business district. Stop playing games and fix the HOUSING problem." **Or, better yet, let's see if we can address BOTH at the same time.**

Best,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17
617-308-1952

> On Jun 22, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Matthew Caldeira via groups.io <matthew.caldeira=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
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Parking garage can capitalize on revenue for day business and for overnight parking.

Cheers.
Matthew Caldeira TMM-9

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025, 8:36 PM Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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> Carol Hillman
> TMM pct 1
>
> chillman96@gmail.com
> 287 Kent St., Apt. 2
> Brookline, MA 02446
> 617-513-9384
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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: John Bassett; letters Globe; TMMA
Cc: Brookline Pax
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27:40 PM

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Werner Lohe via groups.io <werner.lohe=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jklein728@gmail.com
Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:33:27 PM

> parking underground with ... mixed-income housing above

Yes, and the critical thing is to make sure all the parking gets used. It can't be bundled with the apartments. People living there should get first shot at renting spaces, but only at market rates. In that location, many won't have cars, and if there are extra spaces, they can be rented monthly by folks in the neighborhood or hourly by customers of nearby businesses. This all can be complex, but with modern technologies, the percentages of spaces available to various groups can be adjusted to meet market demand.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Werner Lohe
TMM, Pct. 13

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 2:24 PM Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jklein728@gmail.com
Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:38:02 PM

Here's an idea: Take hotels sitting on town land and make them parking lots. (In other words, for those TMMs lare to town developments, we "leased" parking lot in CC to Marriott and last year TMM majority took away a parking lot in the VIllage for housing.). And talk for 2 years about handing over the Babcock st. parking to developers.

Spin your tale. These are facts.

Regina Frawley 16

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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io>
To:	werner.lohe@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com
Cc:	matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 2:47:40 PM

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Werner Lohe via groups.io
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:33 PM
To: jklein728@gmail.com
Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com>; Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>; listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot

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TMM, Pct. 13

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617-308-1952

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	ginatmma@gmail.com
Cc:	jklein728@gmail.com; matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 2:48:47 PM

I am grateful to live in a community where I do not need to own a car to enjoy everything it has to offer.

While that isn't the case for everyone, my hope is that if we can maximize that potential for everyone who it can work for - we won't need to worry about maximizing parking spaces.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 14:38 Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Here's an idea: Take hotels sitting on town land and make them parking lots. (In other words, for those TMMs lare to town developments, we "leased" parking lot in CC to Marriott and last year TMM majority took away a parking lot in the VIllage for housing.). And talk for 2 years about handing over the Babcock st. parking to developers.
>
> Spin your tale. These are facts.
>
> Regina Frawley 16
>
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TMM Pct. 17

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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com
Cc:	Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 3:01:25 PM

It's an unpleasant fact, but a fact nonetheless that privately-developed for-profit housing increases pressure on the town's budget. Indeed, the relative imbalance in the housing/commercial ratios between Brookline on one hand and Cambridge and Somerville on the other is mainly (perhaps entirely) responsible for the fact that we face repeated demands for overrides, while the other two communities do not. So, while it may seem to be attractive to build more high-density housing over the Centre Street parking lot, before we go down that road (or street), we need to determine what it would to to the town's already difficult financial position.

When the Harvard Street re-zoning came before Town Meeting, I was derided for having the gall to suggest that such an analysis needed to be done. Being a trial lawyer, I have no shortage of gall, so I say it again: We need to know the cost of new residential development to the community. (We should do similar analysis to commercial development, too, but that's not what we're talking about here.)

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 23, 2025 at 02:24:15 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com
Cc:	werner.lohe@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 3:13:54 PM

The poor planning for the sidewalks on Beacon St. croaked many businesses.

THen-dierector of Transportation said he KNEW the sidewalks would be ripped up again, as the MWRA required a main to run across Beacon toward the Charles, nonetheless he ripped them up, repaved them and ripped them up again. He actually chuckled as he told me the plan.

Many of those small businesses were authentic Mom and Pop's, with offices above the brownstones. Their clients could only reach them on wooden planks running the length of most of the block near St. Mary's. THe extended sidewalk repairs lasted many months and affected both parking spaces-customers, and pedestrians (the wooden planks).. Few businesses could withstand months of no-business. CC will be no different.

GUess that falls under the "too bac" category. and "That's Life." and "Meh"?????

ETc. Etc. Etc.

Regina Frawley

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> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Werner Lohe via groups.io
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:33 PM
> **To:** jklein728@gmail.com

Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com>; Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>; listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
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Cc:	matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
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Cc:	matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 3:50:16 PM

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Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 3:54:43 PM

You're welcome to make that suggestion.

The same way I'm welcome to note that Cambridge and Somerville are both cities and govern themselves very differently than Brookline.

I have to wonder: how much time is spent by city councilors in those municipalities discussing five parking spaces?

There are those of you who think that is a benefit of our form of government - you're welcome to think that. Personally, I think it reads more like a tossed script from "Parks and Recreation" making fun of us as opposed to anything that is to Brookline's benefit.

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Cc:	matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; Carol hillman; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 3:56:39 PM

Showing, once again, that Winston Churchill was right.

Jonathan J. Margolis
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

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TMM Pct. 17

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Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 3:58:41 PM

As we all know, he had so much to say about parking.

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To: Kevin MacKenzie; Jonathan Margolis
Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; Carol hillman; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 4:06:29 PM

Kevin – I think you're missing a point. The question isn't about 5 parking spaces per se but, instead, that the Centre Street East Lot generates hundreds of thousands of dollars a year of revenue for the town. That's something that's important when discussing parklets or full size parks, or public squares or other changes to the Lots. Unfortunately (in my view) the revenue generation for the town hadn't been called to TM 's attention. That's something I think town decision makers, like TM, should consider.

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Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 3:54 PM
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
To: John Bassett; TMMA
Cc: Brookline Pax
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 4:06:53 PM
Attachments: GADSBY (1) (2).docx

Dear TMMs:

The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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Since its founding in 1705, the town of Brookline has been governed by a Select Board and a Town Meeting, which in 1915 became the first representative town meeting in Massachusetts – a group of citizens elected to participate in town meeting. We are now the largest representative town meeting town in the Commonwealth and have always been proud of the citizen participation in town government. However, we are in the throes of a townwide discussion as to whether we should convert to some form of city government, and there is a signature campaign to start the charter commission process that may ultimately give the voters an opportunity to make such a change.

I was a town meeting member for 40 years, 13 as vice chair of the town's finance committee and 27 as town moderator. I have attended every town meeting but one since 1980. While our form of government isn't perfect, I have been generally impressed with the way the present system works, including its management of a fiscal structural deficit that has existed since Proposition 2½, the state's tax cap law, was enacted in 1980. I am in favor of retaining a representative town meeting and am skeptical about the potential advantages of converting to either a mayor-city council or a city-council-city manager form of government.

The usual criticisms of Brookline's form of government consist of several general (and largely unquantifiable) categories of purported failure, especially in accountability, transparency, and leadership. I do not believe that there is any material difference in those areas between a representative town meeting and a city form of government. Select boards and representative town meetings are as accountable to voters as a mayor and city councilors and their governmental proceedings are as transparent. The select board and its chair provide political leadership in much the same manner as a city council and mayor.

One area where a city government ordinarily surpasses a town government is in efficiency, because of the concentration of decision-making in a city. However, if Brookline were to convert to a city, many things would remain the same. Thanks largely to the skill of our Town Administrators over the past several decades, we have been blessed with excellent department heads and Town staff, and there is no reason to believe that this would change under a mayor or other chief executive and city council. The deliberative processes of the representative town meeting by the select board, finance committee and cognizant town departments would be carried forward to the city council and its subcommittees. Electoral turnout in local elections would continue to depend on the number of competitive races for office and the importance of ballot questions. And the extraordinary panorama of opportunities for Brookline citizen involvement through appointive, elective, and voluntary boards and committees could be preserved.

Some changes that would occur if Brookline became a city could be detrimental, particularly for citizen participation in municipal governance. Gone would be the 255 positions in our Representative Town Meeting, replaced by a few seats on a city council. Gone would be the 30 positions on our advisory finance committee and the important role it plays in legislative decision-making. Gone would be the extensive use of the citizen petition, which often constitutes half of our town meeting agenda. (Although many city charters have provisions for citizen initiatives, these are in practice relatively infrequent and often disposed of by a municipal department rather than considered by the city council).

Legislative and executive power in a city would be concentrated in a city council and mayor or city manager with many consequences, not all of which are positive. The change could well improve governmental efficiency. However, the cost of running for a citywide or even district council seat would greatly exceed the minimal (or non-existent) cost of running for representative town meeting.

While it would be virtually impossible for monied special interests to influence a sizable number of town meeting candidates through campaign contributions, that might not be the case with city councilor candidates. The possibility of political influence on legislation through contributions, and even the possibility of corruption, is enhanced with a city form of government. Furthermore, the cost of a city council campaign would significantly reduce the number of candidates to those with the resources and contacts necessary to finance a campaign. Another risk in conversion involves the role of a mayor or chief executive with strong delegated powers, since the office could be subjected to political pressures.

Most of us in Brookline are proud of our form of government, and we would lose too much by converting to a city.

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0"

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	Jonathan Davis
Cc:	Jonathan Margolis; matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; Carol hillman; listserv TMMA; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 4:10:52 PM

Mr. Davis,

I'd like to clarify that I actually appreciated your point, so I hope I did not miss it.

It is important to consider revenue generators, we all know we desperately need revenue!

To me, it is a question of how to best generate that much needed revenue.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 16:06 Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com> wrote:

> Kevin – I think you're missing a point. The question isn't about 5 parking spaces per se but, instead, that the Centre Street East Lot generates hundreds of thousands of dollars a year of revenue for the town. That's something that's important when discussing parklets or full size parks, or public squares or other changes to the Lots. Unfortunately (in my view) the revenue generation for the town hadn't been called to TM 's attention. That's something I think town decision makers, like TM, should consider.
>
> Jonathan Davis
>
> TMM Pct. 17
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Kevin MacKenzie <kevin4brookline@gmail.com>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 3:54 PM
> **To:** Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
> **Cc:** matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com>; Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>; listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
> **Subject:** Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot

You're welcome to make that suggestion.

The same way I'm welcome to note that Cambridge and Somerville are both cities and govern themselves very differently than Brookline.

I have to wonder: how much time is spent by city councilors in those municipalities discussing five parking spaces?

There are those of you who think that is a benefit of our form of government - you're welcome to think that. Personally, I think it reads more like a tossed script from "Parks and Recreation" making fun of us as opposed to anything that is to Brookline's benefit.

Kevin MacKenzie

Town Meeting Member Precinct 13

Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 15:50 Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> I suggest that the distinction is irrelevant to the discussion and, thus, a distraction.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (617) 240-3205
>
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
>
> On Monday, June 23, 2025 at 03:38:48 PM EDT, Kevin MacKenzie <kevin4brookline@gmail.com> wrote:

Cambridge and Somerville have something else in common - their form of government.

It's something we ought to be mindful of when making comparisons - especially when one is opposed to changing our form of government.

Kevin MacKenzie

Town Meeting Member Precinct 13

Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 15:01 Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> It's an unpleasant fact, but a fact nonetheless that privately-developed for-profit housing increases pressure on the town's budget. Indeed, the relative imbalance in the housing/commercial ratios between Brookline on one hand and Cambridge and Somerville on the other is mainly (perhaps entirely) responsible for the fact that we face repeated demands for overrides, while the other two communities do not. So, while it may seem to be attractive to build more high-density housing over the Centre Street parking lot, before we go down that road (or street), we need to determine what it would to to the town's already difficult financial position.
>
> When the Harvard Street re-zoning came before Town Meeting, I was derided for having the gall to suggest that such an analysis needed to be done. Being a trial lawyer, I have no shortage of gall, so I say it again: We need to know the cost of new residential development to the community. (We should do similar analysis to commercial development, too, but that's not what we're talking about here.)
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (617) 240-3205
>
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Monday, June 23, 2025 at 02:24:15 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Matthew — I could agree with the idea of a 2-3 level parking garage to meet the parking needs of Coolidge Corner business, and nearby residents for overnight parking, but suggest we think bigger. We have multiple challenges and needs, especially more housing for people at all income levels. The Centre street lot is a prime asset of the Town. How about putting the parking underground with 6 or 7 stories of mixed-income housing above it? It's time to think outside the box.

Carol — you said: "We are already short of parking in Brookline's main shopping area. Stop playing games and fix the parking problem." I don't disagree, but think we need to add: "We are already short of HOUSING in Brookline's incredibly convenient, walkable, and transit-friendly central business district. Stop playing games and fix the HOUSING problem." **Or, better yet, let's see if we can address BOTH at the same time.**

Best,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

617-308-1952

> On Jun 22, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Matthew Caldeira via groups.io <matthew.caldeira=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I agree. Parking /lack there of is a variable that can increase or decrease businesses' revenue; i.e. lack there of discourages potential customers from coming to a specific area to spend money.

Seems the consensus is to generate more commerce; as that's what needed (?).

There are already quite a few parks in the area: Amory(the one diagonally across), Griggs, behind Ridley school, the one off Kenwood, top of summit Ave, Dean st, triangle Green on park st, playground next to zaftigs...

I can't imagine people wanting to take their families to a parklet in a busy paved parking lot.

Must also be some level of danger risk with all the cars coming and going in that lot... a bean bag gets tossed too far... in the main pathway of cars driving around....

Why not use Ridley green for this?

What should happen is build a parking garage in the main lot (build up 2 levels, so.3 levels total, and use lot across the street (one that farmer's market uses) for a small park/parklet...

Parking garage can capitalize on revenue for day business and for overnight parking.

Cheers.

Matthew Caldeira TMM-9

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025, 8:36 PM Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> This is a ludicrous idea. We are already short of parking in Brookline’s main shopping area. Stop playing games and fix the parking problem
>
> Carol Hillman
>
> TMM pct 1

chillman96@gmail.com

287 Kent St., Apt. 2

Brookline, MA 02446

617-513-9384

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025 at 7:13 PM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Report This Email
>
> Colleagues – The Centre Street Lots Exploratory Study has created what they call a “parklet” in the main (East) parking lot, with outdoor folding chairs, bean bag games, chalk for drawing, and potted and hanging plants. I think this is to gauge public sentiment for this kind of use. I’d like to call TM’s attention to another aspect of the parklet that’s less obvious.
>
> The parklet occupies 5 metered parking spaces, and, judging by signage, these metered spaces are to be devoted to the parklet from June 3 – 27. That’s a total of 25 days. Of the 25 days, 4 are days when parking is free (3 Sundays and also Juneteenth). So, that reduces the number of metered days to 21.
>
> I’ve been informed by the DPW that, town wide, depending upon the location and usage of the parking meter, a parking meter can be expected to bring in revenue from a low of $3.72/meter/day - $10.33/meter/day. The arithmetical average of that is $7.025/meter/day. (I strongly suspect that the Centre St. East parking lot would bring in more revenue per meter because the lot serves Brookline’s biggest commercial area and includes destinations like Booksmith and the Theater, but for purposes of this posting I’ll go with the arithmetical average).
>
> Using the arithmetical average, for 21 days each of parklet’s parking spaces would be expected to produce about $147.525 of revenue for the Town. (That’s, $7.025/meter/day x 21 metered days from June 3 – 27 = $147.525).

There are 5 parking spaces in the parklet, so, in the aggregate the 5 parking spaces would be expected to produce about $737.625 for the 21 days that the parklet is in operation. (That's $147.525 x 5 spaces = $737.625). It would seem, therefore, that taking the 5 spaces off duty from metering for the parklet is costing the town about $737.62 in lost revenue.

Suppose the parklet were made permanent? I'm informed by the DPW that they consider there to be 302 days in the year when meters are on duty. If the parklet were made permanent, taking 5 metered parking spaces permanently out of revenue generation, that would cost the town $10,607.75 in annual revenue. ($7.025/meter/day x 302 metered days x 5 spaces in the parklet = $10,607.75 estimated revenue loss per year, every year.) Doesn't Brookline have a deficit problem?

Suppose the entire East lot were made into a park, or some sort of public square, or some use other than metered parking? According to my count there are 134 metered parking spaces in the East lot – not counting EV charging spaces, Handicapped spaces, and one zip car space. If my count is correct, making the entire East lot into something other than metered parking would cost the town $284,287.70 in annual revenue. (That would be $7.025/meter/day x 302 metered days in a year x estimated 134 metered parking spaces not counting EV charging spaces, Handicapped spaces, and zip car space = $284,287.70 estimated revenue loss per year, every year.) Doesn't Brookline have a deficit problem?

Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

--
Jonathan Klein

TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com
Cc: John Bassett; TMMA; Brookline Pax
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37:21 PM

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
> The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.
>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board

and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: ginatmma@gmail.com
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; max4brookline@gmail.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 7:01:22 PM

Their new ticket prices aren't very friendly to seniors, either -- I had a membership for many years and went almost every week Then they jacked up the price by 500% percent! Seriously -- five times the money for the same benefits. I could not afford that, so I just don't go anymore. (Yes, I have discussed this with them, but they are unmoved. Their excuse is that people were abusing the previous membership structure. So rather than put in safeguards against that, they prefer to lose anyone in my circumstances.)

I remember 35 or more years ago participating in a group event to preserve the Coolidge -- we circled the building in support and chanted. I had my son in a stroller. Our efforts were successful but it doesn't seem to me that the theater is very grateful.

-- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 1:50 PM Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Can anyone explain why the handicap spots directly in front of the Coolidge Threatre were replaced with barriers?
>
> So much at the "new" Coolidge is user -unfriendly for seniors, including the design of the new section. Many seniors complain, and some, with mobility issues find it too exhausting to navigate to the two new theaters in the new section. Also, the new elevators are sometime "down" and seniors are told to use the stairs or go clear across the building to the old section. However, THAT elevator is also iffy, and on one occasion, both were not working. I had to leave (as I was using a cane at the time) and asked for m y money back, as I had just paid. The staff refused and said it was a new policy not to give refunds, only passes.
>
> I returned for the first time in many, many months (I used to have memberships) recently, and saw the parking spots gone.
>
> Young people must be designing everything, and have no understanding about the needs of seniors.
>
> Regina Frawley 16
>
> On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 10:21 AM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Hello Maxim – thank you for your observation.
> >
> > I think it's possible that people may drive around to find other parking spaces in walkable distance; but I think it's also possible that after a few experiences of not finding convenient parking they may reduce their patronage.

But, the bigger problem in my mind is not 5 spaces themselves but (a) the point that whatever square footage is changed into something other than parking may have a revenue cost to the town that should be acknowledged, and (b) if the square footage is enlarged (supposed all of the lot? Or suppose a quarter of the lot? Or half of the lot?) then the likelihood of drivers being unable to find convenient alternative parking, or choosing to find other venues for shopping – and the foregone town revenue – become worth considering.

Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

PS - Incidentally, I think the choice of the particular 5 spaces for the parklet is problematic because they eliminate the most convenient non-handicapped parking for several stores on Beacon Street.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Maxim Sheinin via groups.io
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:04 PM
To: Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>
Cc: listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

Dear Jonathan,

Thank you for this interesting analysis. You're implicitly assuming that people trying to park in the spaces temporarily occupied by the parklet will instead drive away and not park at all. However we know that there's parking availability both in the Centre Street Lot as well as in adjacent areas (https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/54428/Coolidge-Corner-Parking-Study-Final-Report), so the result will be just a redistribution of occupied parking spots and associated metered parking revenue, with no net impact on revenue for the duration of the study.

I personally applaud the Town staff for setting up this exploratory study - conducting small-scale, time-bound experiments is a great way to gather data to inform decision-making that will have greater and longer-term impact.

Thank you,

Maxim Sheinin

TMM, Pct. 6

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025 at 7:13 PM Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Report This Email
>
> Colleagues – The Centre Street Lots Exploratory Study has created what they call a "parklet" in the main (East) parking lot, with outdoor folding chairs, bean bag games, chalk for drawing, and potted and hanging plants. I think this is to gauge public sentiment for this kind of use. I'd like to call TM's attention to another aspect of the parklet that's less obvious.
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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io>
To:	Brookline TMMA
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] Two Op-Eds of Interest in Today"s Boston Globe: Brookline"s Form of Government
Date:	Monday, June 23, 2025 8:33:44 PM
Attachments:	Opinion Brookline should remain a town and not become a city.pdf Opinion Brookline needs to scrap town meeting and become a city.pdf

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Colleagues,

I want to make sure you're all aware that today's Boston Globe features two opinion pieces commissioned as a point/counterpoint on Brookline's form of government:

- Sandy Gadsby’s “Brookline would lose too much by converting to a city
  - https://tinyurl.com/25dp29sj

- Jeffrey Berry, Catherine Donaher, and Lisa Shatz’s “The time for town meetings in Brookline has come and gone”
  - https://tinyurl.com/ynwnacca

Both articles offer thoughtful perspectives and are worth a read.

Kim Smith
TMM 6

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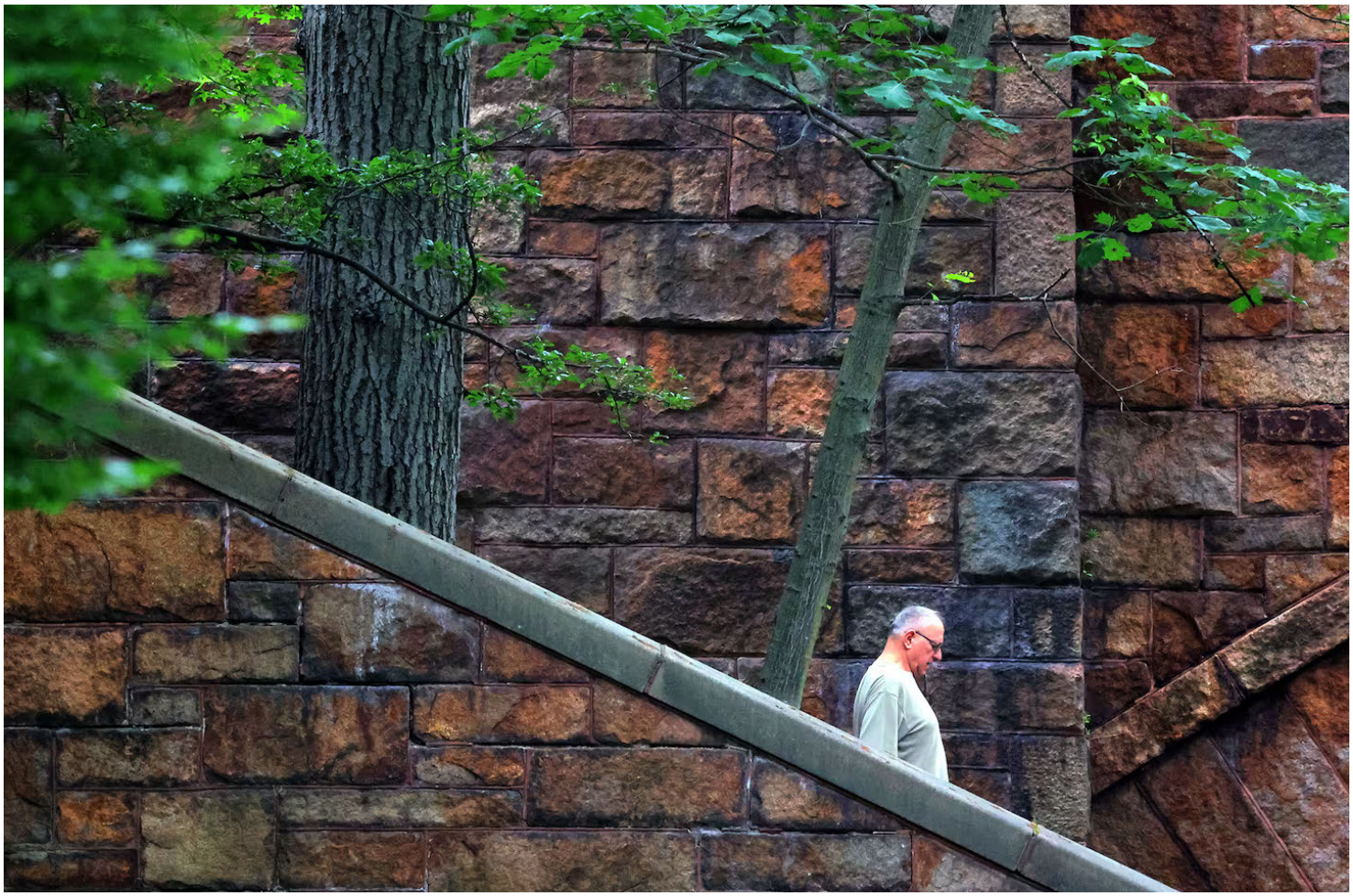
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OPINION

Brookline would lose too much by converting to a city

Strong citizen participation is key to the town's success.

By **Sandy Gadsby** Updated June 23, 2025, 3:00 a.m.



A pedestrian descended the stairs to Riverway Park in Brookline on June 17. LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF

Sandy Gadsby is assistant town moderator of Brookline.

Since its founding in 1705, the town of Brookline has been governed by a Select Board and a Town Meeting, which in 1915 became the first representative town meeting in Massachusetts — a group of citizens elected to participate in town meeting. We are now the largest representative town meeting town in the Commonwealth and have always been proud of the citizen participation in town government. However, we are in the throes of a town-wide discussion as to whether we should convert to some form of city government, and there is a signature campaign to start the charter commission process that may ultimately give voters an opportunity to make such a change.

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The usual criticisms of Brookline's form of government consist of several general (and largely unquantifiable) categories of purported failure, especially in accountability, transparency, and leadership. I do not believe that there is any material difference. Select boards and representative town meetings are as accountable to voters as a mayor and city councilors and their government proceedings are as transparent. The select board and its chair provide political leadership in much the same manner as a city council and mayor.

One area where a city government ordinarily surpasses a town government is in efficiency, because of the concentration of decision-making in a city. However, if Brookline were to convert to a city form of government, many things would remain the

same. Thanks largely to the skill of our town administrators over the years, the departments would be carried forward to the city council and its subcommittees. Electoral turnout in local elections would continue to depend on the number of competitive races for office and the importance of ballot questions. And the extraordinary panorama of opportunities for Brookline citizen involvement through appointive, elective, and voluntary boards and committees could be preserved.

Some changes that would occur if Brookline became a city could be detrimental, particularly for citizen participation in municipal governance. Gone would be the 255 positions in our representative town meeting, replaced by a few seats on a city council. Gone would be the 30 positions on our advisory finance committee and the important role it plays in legislative decision-making. Gone would be the extensive use of the citizen petition, which often constitutes half of our town meeting agenda. (Although many city charters have provisions for citizen initiatives, these are in practice relatively infrequent and often disposed of by a municipal department rather than considered by the city council.)

Legislative and executive power in a city would be concentrated in a mayor or city manager and a city council, with many consequences, not all of which would be positive. The change could well improve governmental efficiency. However, the cost of running for a citywide or even district council seat would greatly exceed the minimal (or nonexistent) cost of running for representative town meeting.

While it would be virtually impossible for monied special interests to influence a sizable number of town meeting candidates through campaign contributions, that might not be the case with city council candidates. The possibility of political influence on legislation through contributions, and even the possibility of corruption, is enhanced with a city form of government. Furthermore, the cost of a city council campaign would significantly reduce the number of candidates to those with the

resources and contacts necessary to finance a campaign.

Another risk in conversion involves the role of a mayor or chief executive with strong delegation powers, since the office could be subjected to political pressures. Most of us in Brookline are proud of our form of government, and we would lose too much by converting to a city.

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OPINION

The time for town meetings in Brookline has come and gone

Brookline needs a more efficient, accountable government

By **Jeffrey M. Berry, Catherine Donaher, and Lisa Shatz** Updated June 23, 2025, 3:00 a.m.



A pedestrian passed the sculpture "Small Wonders in the River" by Gail Jerauld Bos and Marnie Sinclair in Riverway Park in Brookline on June 17. LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF

Jeffrey M. Berry is a professor emeritus of political science at Tufts University. Catherine Donaher is the retired principal at Catherine Donaher & Associates. Lisa

Shatz is a professor emeritus of electrical engineering at Suffolk University.

Brookline has the dubious distinction of being the largest municipality in Massachusetts that is not a city. As a town, it has no mayor and no city council. Instead, it is governed by town meeting, an antiquated form of government unsuited to a community of 63,000 people.

Town meeting had its origins in New England villages during colonial times. Residents would gather for a night or two and resolve issues large and small — the town budget and a new well might be the major items on the agenda. As towns grew and it was no longer feasible to allow all adult citizens to participate, the open town meeting was replaced by representative town meeting. In this form of government, a large citizen legislature is elected — 255 representatives in Brookline's case. Town meetings normally convene just twice a year.

For the past 16 months, the three of us sat on a Brookline town committee tasked with comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the representative town meeting form with two other forms of municipal government: the mayor-city council and city council-city manager. After taking testimony from experts, studying the historical record, and generating nine original research papers on municipal government, the committee issued a set of recommendations in April. Some of our colleagues favored preserving the town meeting. We concluded, however, that it is time for Brookline to go through the charter commission process to design a more modern form of government.

The town meeting in Brookline is often defended as a type of participatory democracy. It is anything but. It is representative democracy in which elected officials act on behalf of their constituents. In principle there is nothing wrong with that — our national government and our state government are representative democracies. In Brookline, though, our electoral structure does not work to maximize the influence of voters over their elected representatives.

We see three fundamental problems with the electoral system in Brookline:

Elections should be simple and straightforward. Massachusetts towns like Brookline hold annual municipal elections every spring. Not surprisingly, turnout in Massachusetts town elections is very low, sometimes below 20 percent of registered voters and rarely above 30 percent.

Each of Brookline's 17 precincts elects 15 members to town meeting — five each year, as those elected serve three-year terms. There are many other offices on the ballot, including library trustees and constables. For most Brookline voters, town meeting elections are obscure, as they have little visibility and it's difficult to know how the candidates differ from one another. As such, these elections do not offer a mirror of public opinion but largely reflect familiarity with some of one's neighbors.

Government should be transparent. A primary reason why Brookline elections are problematic is because the town's government is complex. In addition to the town meeting, Brookline has a select board, a five-member elected body that is quasi-legislative and quasi-administrative. Its responsibilities are complicated, and it is not clear to the average voter how its authority is distinct from that of town meeting. There is also a town administrator who runs day-to-day operations but also shares some executive powers, which adds to the confusion.

There is little reason to believe that representative town meeting government offers superior performance over a city form of government. The town meeting format makes it more difficult for voters to understand who in the Brookline government is in charge of what. Confusion is never a characteristic of good government.

Elections should maximize accountability. Those who want to maintain the representative town meeting form of government argue that those elected are held accountable by the very fact that they are up for reelection every three years. In this interpretation, if we don't like how our policy makers are performing, we can use the ballot to kick them out of office.

Accountability is not an either/or attribute, however. Accountability rests on knowing what our policy makers stand for, and Brookline's convoluted election system works against this.

Taken together, these shortcomings make it harder for Brookline to take effective action on pressing local problems, such as increasing our supply of affordable housing and strengthening the town's finances.

The arguments we heard for keeping the town meeting are weak. Some claim that doing away with it would mean a loss of citizen participation, as its 255 members would no longer have a role in government. But all types of municipalities have active citizens, and there are plenty of other ways for people who care about Brookline to volunteer and participate.

The town meeting form of governance is a romantic vestige of an earlier and simpler time. In a large community such as Brookline, with meetings that go on for many nights and are poorly attended by ordinary citizens, it's challenging to discern the very structure of decision-making.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Judith Vanderkay
Cc: jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; max4brookline@gmail.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 8:41:36 PM

I agree with you. Regina

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 7:01 PM Judith Vanderkay <jvanderkay@gmail.com> wrote:

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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

PS - Incidentally, I think the choice of the particular 5 spaces for the parklet is problematic because they eliminate the most convenient non-handicapped parking for several stores on Beacon Street.

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Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:04 PM
To: Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>
Cc: listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

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Thank you for this interesting analysis. You're implicitly assuming that people trying to park in the spaces temporarily occupied by the parklet will instead drive away and not park at all. However we know that there's parking availability both in the Centre Street Lot as well as in adjacent areas (https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/54428/Coolidge-Corner-Parking-

Study-Final-Report), so the result will be just a redistribution of occupied parking spots and associated metered parking revenue, with no net impact on revenue for the duration of the study.

I personally applaud the Town staff for setting up this exploratory study - conducting small-scale, time-bound experiments is a great way to gather data to inform decision-making that will have greater and longer-term impact.

Thank you,

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TMM, Pct. 6

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21 metered days from June 3 – 27 = $147.525).

There are 5 parking spaces in the parklet, so, in the aggregate the 5 parking spaces would be expected to produce about $737.625 for the 21 days that the parklet is in operation. (That's $147.525 x 5 spaces = $737.625). It would seem, therefore, that taking the 5 spaces off duty from metering for the parklet is costing the town about $737.62 in lost revenue.

Suppose the parklet were made permanent? I'm informed by the DPW that they consider there to be 302 days in the year when meters are on duty. If the parklet were made permanent, taking 5 metered parking spaces permanently out of revenue generation, that would cost the town $10,607.75 in annual revenue. ($7.025/meter/day x 302 metered days x 5 spaces in the parklet = $10,607.75 estimated revenue loss per year, every year.) Doesn't Brookline have a deficit problem?

Suppose the entire East lot were made into a park, or some sort of public square, or some use other than metered parking? According to my count there are 134 metered parking spaces in the East lot – not counting EV charging spaces, Handicapped spaces, and one zip car space. If my count is correct, making the entire East lot into something other than metered parking would cost the town $284,287.70 in annual revenue. (That would be $7.025/meter/day x 302 metered days in a year x estimated 134 metered parking spaces not counting EV charging spaces, Handicapped spaces, and zip car space = $284,287.70 estimated revenue loss per year, every year.) Doesn't Brookline have a deficit problem?

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TMM Pct. 17

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To: ginatmma@gmail.com
Cc: Judith Vanderkay; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; max4brookline@gmail.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 8:50:59 PM

I dropped my joint-membership as well, and I'm a film freak fan! I went to movies at least once a week for decades. Not now.

REmember when the Senior Day at Coolidge was $3? Now much more. I got a small popcorn, because I had a coupon. Otherwise $7.50!!!!! I was flabbergasted. Few seniors can splurge like that. I certainly won;t pay that.

TOo bad. My joint-membership partner has steaming devices, and now watches movies at home1. She too would prefer the "in-person" big screen experience. But the prices have pushed us away. And for me, from South Brookline, the parking spots scarcity makes it less likely I'll do much of anything inthe CC.
Regina

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> **Sent:** Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:04 PM
> **To:** Jonathan Davis <jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com>

Cc: listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot

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TMM, Pct. 6

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TMM Pct. 17

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To: ginatmma@gmail.com
Cc: Judith Vanderkay; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; max4brookline@gmail.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FW: Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 9:17:21 PM

Greetings,

I went by what seems to be the now concluded parklett. The plants David L. spoke of were still in a parking spot or two, clustered together; the chairs are gone. I couldn't help but notice the many trash bins nearby (and trash scattered on the ground). The idea is a nice one; the situation in that particular locale less so. And, there were cars circling for spots in the middle of a Monday afternoon. I had parked several blocks away; I always do because using the parking lot is an exercise in frustration I will never opt into, but I still need to use my car. I am fortunate; not everyone is able to walk from that far away.

As we continue to build in Brookline, setbacks and courtyards for new buildings are worth pursuing, so those without yard space, balconies or decks do have access to outdoor space in the form of private pocket-parks. Europeans in densely populated cities do this well. As we continue to grow in Brookline, the reality that cars aren't going away and parking with relative ease is a community benefit is also worth keeping in mind.

Respectfully,
Amy Hummel
P12

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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: anthony.flint@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; John Bassett; TMMA; Brookline Pax
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025 9:54:44 PM

I'm quite embarrassed, I didn't realize there were dueling op-eds! Quite clever of the Globe, in point-counterpoint fashion.

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city-government/

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 5:37 PM Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Here's the link to the op-ed:
>
> https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/
>
> It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.
>
> It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..
>
> Anthony Flint
> Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
> Vice President High Street Hill Association
> 617-930-1044
> Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
> Host | Land Matters podcast
> Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
> @anthonyflint
>
> On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: kevin4brookline@gmail.com; "Jonathan Margolis"
Cc: "listserv TMMA"; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 9:25:23 AM

Jonathan Margolis: “Indeed, the relative imbalance in the housing/commercial ratios between Brookline on one hand and Cambridge and Somerville on the other is mainly (perhaps entirely) responsible for the fact that we face repeated demands for overrides, while the other two communities do not.”

>> Kevin MacKenzie: “The same way I’m welcome to note that Cambridge and Somerville are both cities and govern themselves very differently than Brookline.”

Beware the logical fallacy, i.e., Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 3:54 PM
To: Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com>
Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; jklein728@gmail.com; Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com>; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot

You’re welcome to make that suggestion.

The same way I’m welcome to note that Cambridge and Somerville are both cities and govern themselves very differently than Brookline.

I have to wonder: how much time is spent by city councilors in those municipalities discussing five parking spaces?

There are those of you who think that is a benefit of our form of government - you’re welcome to think that. Personally, I think it reads more like a tossed script from “Parks and Recreation” making fun of us as opposed to anything that is to Brookline’s

benefit.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 15:50 Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> I suggest that the distinction is irrelevant to the discussion and, thus, a distraction.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Monday, June 23, 2025 at 03:38:48 PM EDT, Kevin MacKenzie <kevin4brookline@gmail.com> wrote:

Cambridge and Somerville have something else in common - their form of government.

It's something we ought to be mindful of when making comparisons - especially when one is opposed to changing our form of government.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 15:01 Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> It's an unpleasant fact, but a fact nonetheless that privately-developed for-profit housing increases pressure on the town's budget. Indeed, the relative imbalance in the housing/commercial ratios between Brookline on one hand and Cambridge and Somerville on the other is mainly (perhaps entirely) responsible for the fact that we face repeated demands for overrides, while the other two communities do not. So, while it may seem to be attractive to build more high-density housing over the Centre Street parking lot, before we go down that road (or street), we need to determine what it would to to the town's already difficult financial position.
>
> When the Harvard Street re-zoning came before Town Meeting, I was derided for having the gall to suggest that such an analysis needed to be done. Being a trial lawyer, I have no shortage of gall, so I say it again: We need to know the cost of new residential development to the community. (We should do similar analysis to commercial development, too, but that's not what we're talking about here.)

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 23, 2025 at 02:24:15 PM EDT, Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Matthew — I could agree with the idea of a 2-3 level parking garage to meet the parking needs of Coolidge Corner business, and nearby residents for overnight parking, but suggest we think bigger. We have multiple challenges and needs, especially more housing for people at all income levels. The Centre street lot is a prime asset of the Town. How about putting the parking underground with 6 or 7 stories of mixed-income housing above it? It's time to think outside the box.

Carol — you said: "We are already short of parking in Brookline's main shopping area. Stop playing games and fix the parking problem." I don't disagree, but think we need to add: "We are already short of HOUSING in Brookline's incredibly convenient, walkable, and transit-friendly central business district. Stop playing games and fix the HOUSING problem." **Or, better yet, let's see if we can address BOTH at the same time.**

Best,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17
617-308-1952

> On Jun 22, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Matthew Caldeira via groups.io <matthew.caldeira=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I agree. Parking /lack there of is a variable that can increase or decrease businesses' revenue; i.e. lack there of discourages potential customers from coming to a specific area to spend money.
> Seems the consensus is to generate more commerce; as that's what needed (?).
> There are already quite a few parks in the area: Amory(the one diagonally across), Griggs, behind Ridley school, the one off Kenwood, top of summit Ave, Dean st, triangle Green on park st, playground next to zaftigs...
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> I can't imagine people wanting to take their families to a parklet in a busy paved parking lot.
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> Must also be some level of danger risk with all the cars coming and going in that lot... a bean bag gets tossed too far... in the main pathway of cars driving around....

Why not use Ridley green for this?

What should happen is build a parking garage in the main lot (build up 2 levels, so.3 levels total, and use lot across the street (one that farmer's market uses) for a small park/parklet...
Parking garage can capitalize on revenue for day business and for overnight parking.

Cheers.
Matthew Caldeira TMM-9

On Sun, Jun 22, 2025, 8:36 PM Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> This is a ludicrous idea. We are already short of parking in Brookline's main shopping area. Stop playing games and fix the parking problem
> Carol Hillman
> TMM pct 1
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> chillman96@gmail.com
> 287 Kent St., Apt. 2
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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: werner.lohe@gmail.com
Cc: "listserv TMMA"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 9:33:35 AM

>> Yes, and the critical thing is to make sure all the parking gets used.<<

But unless demand for parking is constant throughout the day/week/month/year, for all of it to be used would leave some/many without parking when there's above the minimum demand for it.

We have multiple fiscal objectives, i.e., optimize parking revenue, optimize commercial real estate tax, optimize meals tax.

We also have multiple non-fiscal objectives, grouped here for convenience as "quality of Brookline life."

I won't pretend to know how much of balancing the above is art v science.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Werner Lohe via groups.io
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:33 PM
To: jklein728@gmail.com
Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com>; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot

> parking underground with ... mixed-income housing above

Yes, and the critical thing is to make sure all the parking gets used. It can't be bundled with the apartments. People living there should get first shot at renting spaces, but only at market rates. In that location, many won't have cars, and if there are extra spaces, they can be rented monthly by folks in the neighborhood or hourly by customers of nearby businesses. This all can be complex, but with modern technologies, the percentages of spaces available to various groups can be adjusted to meet market demand.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Werner Lohe
TMM, Pct. 13

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Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: baswolfe@aol.com; "TMMA"
Cc: "Brookline Pax"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 9:37:29 AM

>> The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." <<

They actually start their argument with the false statement that “Brookline has the dubious distinction of being the largest municipality in Massachusetts that is not a city.”

That distinction, dubious or otherwise, belongs to Plymouth, with a population about 4% higher than we have here.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** John Bassett via groups.io
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:28 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public

input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TMMA; KSmith1450@aol.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Two Op-Eds of Interest in Today"s Boston Globe: Brookline"s Form of Government
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 10:47:26 AM
Attachments: GADSBY (1) (2).docx

Dear TMMs:

In case you did not notice my message from yesterday, the link that Kim sent with her email below is to the fouled-up version of my OpEd piece that the Globe published. The correct version is attached.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 8:32 PM
To: Brookline TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Two Op-Eds of Interest in Today's Boston Globe: Brookline's Form of Government

Colleagues,

I want to make sure you're all aware that today's Boston Globe features two opinion pieces commissioned as a point/counterpoint on Brookline's form of government:

- Sandy Gadsby's "Brookline would lose too much by converting to a city
  - https://tinyurl.com/25dp29sj
- Jeffrey Berry, Catherine Donaher, and Lisa Shatz's "The time for town meetings in Brookline has come and gone"
  - https://tinyurl.com/ynwnacca

Both articles offer thoughtful perspectives and are worth a read.

Kim Smith
TMM 6

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Since its founding in 1705, the town of Brookline has been governed by a Select Board and a Town Meeting, which in 1915 became the first representative town meeting in Massachusetts – a group of citizens elected to participate in town meeting. We are now the largest representative town meeting town in the Commonwealth and have always been proud of the citizen participation in town government. However, we are in the throes of a townwide discussion as to whether we should convert to some form of city government, and there is a signature campaign to start the charter commission process that may ultimately give the voters an opportunity to make such a change.

I was a town meeting member for 40 years, 13 as vice chair of the town's finance committee and 27 as town moderator. I have attended every town meeting but one since 1980. While our form of government isn't perfect, I have been generally impressed with the way the present system works, including its management of a fiscal structural deficit that has existed since Proposition 2½, the state's tax cap law, was enacted in 1980. I am in favor of retaining a representative town meeting and am skeptical about the potential advantages of converting to either a mayor-city council or a city-council-city manager form of government.

The usual criticisms of Brookline's form of government consist of several general (and largely unquantifiable) categories of purported failure, especially in accountability, transparency, and leadership. I do not believe that there is any material difference in those areas between a representative town meeting and a city form of government. Select boards and representative town meetings are as accountable to voters as a mayor and city councilors and their governmental proceedings are as transparent. The select board and its chair provide political leadership in much the same manner as a city council and mayor.

One area where a city government ordinarily surpasses a town government is in efficiency, because of the concentration of decision-making in a city. However, if Brookline were to convert to a city, many things would remain the same. Thanks largely to the skill of our Town Administrators over the past several decades, we have been blessed with excellent department heads and Town staff, and there is no reason to believe that this would change under a mayor or other chief executive and city council. The deliberative processes of the representative town meeting by the select board, finance committee and cognizant town departments would be carried forward to the city council and its subcommittees. Electoral turnout in local elections would continue to depend on the number of competitive races for office and the importance of ballot questions. And the extraordinary panorama of opportunities for Brookline citizen involvement through appointive, elective, and voluntary boards and committees could be preserved.

Some changes that would occur if Brookline became a city could be detrimental, particularly for citizen participation in municipal governance. Gone would be the 255 positions in our Representative Town Meeting, replaced by a few seats on a city council. Gone would be the 30 positions on our advisory finance committee and the important role it plays in legislative decision-making. Gone would be the extensive use of the citizen petition, which often constitutes half of our town meeting agenda. (Although many city charters have provisions for citizen initiatives, these are in practice relatively infrequent and often disposed of by a municipal department rather than considered by the city council).

Legislative and executive power in a city would be concentrated in a city council and mayor or city manager with many consequences, not all of which are positive. The change could well improve governmental efficiency. However, the cost of running for a citywide or even district council seat would greatly exceed the minimal (or non-existent) cost of running for representative town meeting.

While it would be virtually impossible for monied special interests to influence a sizable number of town meeting candidates through campaign contributions, that might not be the case with city councilor candidates. The possibility of political influence on legislation through contributions, and even the possibility of corruption, is enhanced with a city form of government. Furthermore, the cost of a city council campaign would significantly reduce the number of candidates to those with the resources and contacts necessary to finance a campaign. Another risk in conversion involves the role of a mayor or chief executive with strong delegated powers, since the office could be subjected to political pressures.

Most of us in Brookline are proud of our form of government, and we would lose too much by converting to a city.

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0"

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA List Serve
Subject: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 11:18:48 AM
Attachments: WSJ - Printing New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become.pdf

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NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.

Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-
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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Real Estate

New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor

Zohran Mamdani, a 33-year-old candidate pledging rent freezes, has leapt to the forefront of Tuesday's primary

By Rebecca Picciotto, Maggie Grether and Redmond Bernhold
Jun 24, 2025 05:30 a.m. ET

Amara Mayo's search for an affordable apartment in New York City is becoming more like a pageant contest than typical house hunting.

The 23-year-old paralegal carefully curated photos of herself to post in Facebook housing groups, where hundreds of thousands of other 20-somethings are vying for leases.

"You throw up six of your best selfies, and you're just hoping someone will see them and be like: 'Oh you look friendly, let's be roommates,'" Mayo said.

New York City's cutthroat rental market is a big reason why she supports Zohran Mamdani for New York City mayor. The struggle to find an affordable place has become a flashpoint in the city's Democratic primary for mayor.

The 33-year-old state assemblyman and democratic socialist from Queens has made housing a core piece of his agenda, unexpectedly catapulting him toward the front of the race.

Mamdani is pledging to freeze rents on rent-stabilized apartments, invest $70 billion in publicly subsidized housing, open up public land for housing development and more. The agenda, along with promises of free bus rides and government-owned grocery stores, have put him in a dead heat with former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo for Tuesday's primary.

Railing against high rents in New York City has been a mayoral campaign formula for decades. A former letter carrier ran for mayor in 2005 and for governor in 2010 as the Rent Is Too Damn High party's candidate. (He didn't win.)

Yet the housing crisis has hit a new level, even by New York City standards. The city's vacancy rates recently dropped to a record 1.4%, the lowest since 1968.

The monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment has climbed 17.5% over the past year to $5,560, according to rental-listing site Zumper, the most of any U.S. city.

Cuomo's housing proposals are focused on boosting development rather than strengthening rent restrictions. That platform helped secure his campaign millions in donations from the real-estate industry, partly by drawing a contrast to Mamdani.

"He's never built anything," Cuomo said of his opponent in a recent debate.

But Mamdani's momentum this year is a sign that renters are even more desperate and are looking for immediate relief in the most expensive and competitive rental market in the city's history.

"When you have any municipality where its workers can't afford to live in the city that they work, there's a real incentive to change leadership," said Jonathan Miller, chief executive of the New York City real-estate appraisal firm Miller Samuel.

Developers and landlords are critical of Mamdani's platform. They say that a rent freeze would discourage any new investment or even spending on maintaining existing units. And they are already dealing with the impacts of New York City's 2019 rent laws, which made it harder to increase prices on the city's more than one million rent-regulated units.

"Mamdani's platform would only deepen that crisis," said Jared Epstein, president of the Manhattan-based developer Aurora Capital Associates.

In the New York rental market, lines for open houses regularly wrap around the block, and it is no longer enough to apply to an apartment with a stable income and strong credit score. Young renters have to get creative.

Some like Mayo are curating their personal brands as the perfect roommate to win over complete strangers on social media, Craigslist and Reddit.

Others say they are trying to curry favor with brokers by taking them out for cocktails or slipping them extra cash under the table. Everyone accepts that a large chunk of their entry-level incomes will be spent on rent.

Mayo's budget of $1,500 and $1,800 a month won't get her very far in a city where median asking rents have been surging to record levels since February, the middle of what is typically the offseason.

And that was before the FARE Act went into effect on June 11, banning the longstanding practice of brokers charging tenants fees. Rents rose overnight and have continued to climb.

Just over a week since the enactment of the FARE Act, rents are up an additional 16%, according to early data from real-estate analytics firm UrbanDigs. The median asking rent spiked to $6,346

on Sunday, raising the rolling average to $5,599 for the past week.

Young renters desperate for housing are reluctantly swallowing the exorbitant prices. Danylo Korotin, a 28-year-old artist, is prepared to spend about 60% of his income on rent and utilities, double the 30% recommended guideline. Those high costs are partly why he is voting for Mamdani.

“I’m very grateful to even have a chance at a politician who really strives to represent working class New Yorkers,” Korotin said.

Even those willing to pay high rental rates are struggling to find an empty apartment in the first place. When new supply does get added, it often skews luxury because of the high cost of building in the city.

The fierce competition among renters often means that new inventory spends just days or even hours on the market.

The dynamic has left renters like Harditya Sarvaiya, a 26-year-old software engineer, couch-surfing at friends’ apartments. Like many apartment hunters, he spends hours sifting through online rental marketplaces like StreetEasy, Facebook groups and Reddit with little luck. For now, he has settled on a hotel room to ride out the rest of June while he finds more permanent housing.

“A lot of the apartments that I really wanted just got off the market,” he said. “Within a few hours, they were off the market.”

Write to Rebecca Picciotto at Rebecca.Picciotto@wsj.com, Maggie Grether at maggie.grether@wsj.com and Redmond Bernhold at redmond.bernhold@wsj.com

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 11:25:46 AM

I'm going to re-rewrite this headline

Private markets have so completely failed to provide adequate housing that residents are demanding government action to fix the problem wealth concentration caused

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
>
> Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA List Serve; lisafshatz@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 11:25:51 AM

And as the old saying has it, If your bubba had roller skates, she'd be a trolley car.

(That's actually a bowdlerized version of the original saying, but I like this version better.)

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at 11:18:48 AM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.

Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 11:47:09 AM

It would be about time!
John Bassett
p6

In a message dated 6/24/2025 11:18:48 AM Eastern Daylight Time, lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io writes:

> NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
>
> Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
To: anthony.flint@gmail.com
Cc: John Bassett; TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 11:47:53 AM

Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
> The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bettina Neuefeind via groups.io <bettina.neuefeind=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: baswolfe@aol.com; lisafshatz@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; John Bassett via groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 11:51:46 AM

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yes, wouldn't it be terrible if we had a functioning, social safety net and universal healthcare, education and childcare system for all?

--
Bettina Neuefeind

On June 24, 2025 at 11:47:06 AM, John Bassett via groups.io (baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io) wrote:

> It would be about time!
> John Bassett
> p6
>
> In a message dated 6/24/2025 11:18:48 AM Eastern Daylight Time, lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io writes:
>
> > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
> >
> > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 1:05:15 PM

Is that really a problem. Lets not make socialists into bogeymen

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io
<lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
>
> Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: chillman96@gmail.com
Cc: lisafshatz@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 1:31:37 PM

I think it best to have a combination of socialism and capitalism as can be seen in Nordic countries.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Jun 24, 2025, at 1:05 PM, Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
>
> Is that really a problem. Lets not make socialists into bogeymen
>
> Carol Hillman
> The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
> chillman96@gmail.com
> 287 Kent St., Apt. 2
> Brookline, MA 02446
> 617-513-9384
>
> On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
> >
> > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 1:35:37 PM

Oh come on Lisa. Let's be honest about why you're worried about that specific mayoral candidate.

Omar Mabrouk TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: chillman96@gmail.com
Cc: "TMMA List Serve"; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 1:36:47 PM

>> Lets not make socialists into bogeymen <<

I'd worry more about inadequately regulated capitalists.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Carol hillman via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 1:05 PM
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: TMMA List Serve <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor

Is that really a problem. Lets not make socialists into bogeymen

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
>
> Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: omarmabrouk@hotmail.com
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 1:44:00 PM

Omar,

Do you think you can at least try to be polite to me. Zionists have feelings too.

Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

> On Jun 24, 2025, at 1:35 PM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
>
> Oh come on Lisa. Let's be honest about why you're worried about that specific mayoral candidate.
>
> Omar Mabrouk TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: baswolfe@aol.com; TMMA; Brookline Pax
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 2:23:17 PM

And a land mass about 20 times the size of Brookline (134 vs. <7 sq miles) --mostly open space, which is a Brookline scarcity.

Regina Frawley
TMM 16

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 9:37 AM Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >> The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." <<
>
> They actually start their argument with the false statement that “Brookline has the dubious distinction of being the largest municipality in Massachusetts that is not a city.”
>
> That distinction, dubious or otherwise, belongs to Plymouth, with a population about 4% higher than we have here.
>
> Regards, Neil, TMM1
>
> Neil R. Gordon, President
>
> N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
>
> 87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (508) 265-1362
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** John Bassett via groups.io
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:28 PM

To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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John Bassett

26 Searle Ave.

Brookline, MA 02445

617 543 7747

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: werner.lohe@gmail.com; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 2:49:51 PM

When spots are removed (first block of Harvard off of Beacon, when used for taxis, which never came back once Uber competed), and thus more "demand" for fewer spots, then of course people will ceases to "Demand" -- and shop elsewhere.

This frequent scenario has been played out often: Ensuring over time that the spots will not be filled thus enabling the faux shout: LOOK, we don't need parking!!! Let's fill the spots with "other".

It's cynical faux planning. And for the majority here who didn't even live in Brookline 20-25 years ago, this is the precise plan, parking underground, shopping on ground floor, and housing above, that was proposed by the then Comprehensive Plan, co-chaired by two Selectmen, Joe Geller and Bob Allen. Surprise, surprise. How to play the long-game.

Regina Frawley 16

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 9:33 AM Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >> Yes, and the critical thing is to make sure all the parking gets used.<<
>
> But unless demand for parking is constant throughout the day/week/month/year, for all of it to be used would leave some/many without parking when there's above the minimum demand for it.
>
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> I won't pretend to know how much of balancing the above is art v science.
>
> Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Werner Lohe via groups.io
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:33 PM
To: jklein728@gmail.com
Cc: matthew.caldeira@gmail.com; Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com>; jdavis@cl-lawgroup.com; listserv TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; ztesler@brooklinema.gov
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot

> parking underground with ... mixed-income housing above

Yes, and the critical thing is to make sure all the parking gets used. It can't be bundled with the apartments. People living there should get first shot at renting spaces, but only at market rates. In that location, many won't have cars, and if there are extra spaces, they can be rented monthly by folks in the neighborhood or hourly by customers of nearby businesses. This all can be complex, but with modern technologies, the percentages of spaces available to various groups can be adjusted to meet market demand.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Werner Lohe

TMM, Pct. 13

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 2:24 PM Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Best,

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

617-308-1952

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Parking garage can capitalize on revenue for day business and for overnight parking.

Cheers.

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>
> Carol Hillman
>
> TMM pct 1
>
> chillman96@gmail.com
>
> 287 Kent St., Apt. 2
>
> Brookline, MA 02446
>
> 617-513-9384

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Jonathan Davis

TMM Pct. 17

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Neil Gordon
Cc: Werner Lohe; listserv TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 5:10:17 PM

It would be nice to have some data on what percent of the people who shop/dine/go to the movies in Coolidge Corner, Washington Square and Brookline Village get to these destinations by car and how many do not — either getting their by transit, walking, biking or other means.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 24, 2025, at 9:33 AM, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
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Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: anthonybuono728@gmail.com
Cc: lisafshatz@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 5:13:27 PM

Anthony

Thank you

> On Jun 24, 2025, at 11:25 AM, Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I'm going to re-rewrite this headline
>
> Private markets have so completely failed to provide adequate housing that residents are demanding government action to fix the problem wealth concentration caused
>
> On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
> >
> > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Lescohier via groups.io <david=lescohier.com@groups.io>
To: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com
Cc: lisafshatz@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 5:39:19 PM

Hello TMMs,

After Cuba's revololution, Fidel announced that since Cubans had been paying rent to landlords, landlords were no longer entitled to own their properties. Henceforth, tenants were to become the owners of their apartments.

Wow!!

But in the long term, tenants encountered many problems. They were stuck with their apartments. Buying and selling was henceforth illegal. If they had children, for example, and needed more room, this was blocked.

Maintenance was not carried out.

No one was responsible for repairs, which ultimately led to multi unit buildings deteriorating to the point of collapse. Even now, a dozen buildings a day are lost in Havana.

(Recently, there have been some reforms.)

But this is an extreme example of how ideology can lead to dysfunctional, unsustainable management of housing stock.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 24, 2025 5:13:22 PM EDT, "Andrew Fischer via groups.io" <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony
>
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lee Biernbaum via groups.io <lee=acrossb.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Centre Street main (East) parking lot
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 6:05:47 PM

The last time EDAB did a study in Coolidge Corner, the majority did not arrive by car. It was long enough ago now that it predates much of the better cycle infrastructure in town as well.

Lee Biernbaum
TMM p9

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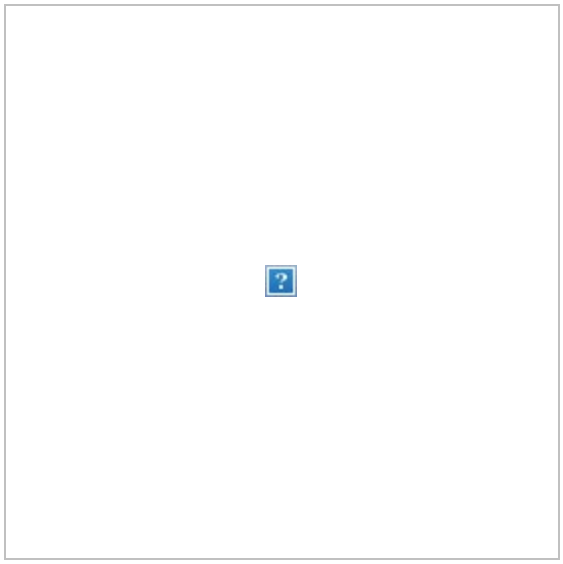
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Christopher Mutty via groups.io <muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com
Cc: anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 7:20:23 PM

I often hear that a benefit of becoming a city is the economic development that will follow from a streamlined government. Take a look at the Riverside station site in Newton which has been under development since 2009. See below for a column from the Charles River Chamber newsletter today.

Christopher Mutty
TMM P9

A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station



Scholars estimate that it took 26 years to build the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do

something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

In September, developer Robert Korff of Mark Development will return to the Newton City Council to seek approval for a project that's been in the works in various forms since 2009 and has been before the council multiple times since 2011.

The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham

Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

Then let the building, finally, begin.

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:47 AM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony et al:
>
> The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.
>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM

To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
> The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.
>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by

Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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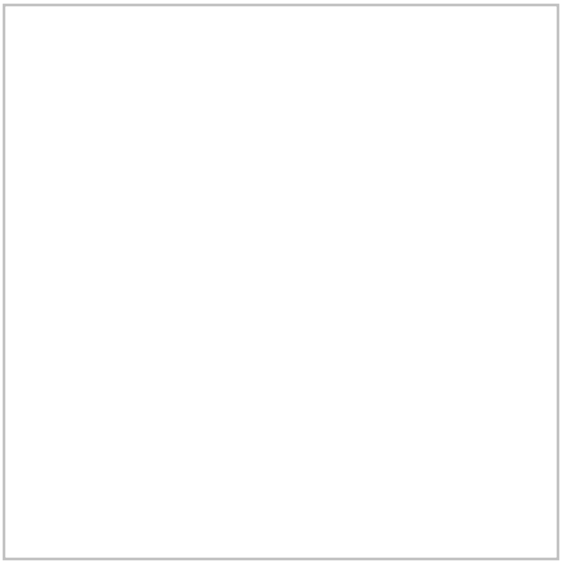
From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:32:45 PM

I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM Christopher Mutty via groups.io <muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

In September, developer Robert Korff of Mark Development will return to the Newton City Council to seek approval for a project that's been in the works in various forms since 2009 and has been before the council multiple times since 2011.

The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of

the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

Then let the building, finally, begin.

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:47 AM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To: kevin4brookline@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; brooklinepax@groups.io
Cc: jjmargolis@yahoo.com; cbolon@verizon.net; neil@nrgordon.com; jvanderkay@gmail.com
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Sandy Gadsby"s Globe article on Brookline"s town form of government
Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 10:10:40 PM

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Marty Rosenthal, tmm-9 etc
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
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"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."* attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

> **From:** BrooklinePAX@groups.io <BrooklinePAX@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io
> **Sent:** Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:57 PM

To: jvanderkay@gmail.com
Cc: jjmargolis@yahoo.com; cbolon@verizon.net; brooklinepax@groups.io; neil@nrgordon.com
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] Sandy Gadsby's Globe article on Brookline's town form of government

Judith;

Which proponent of city government in Brookline has troubled you so?
Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

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> >
> > Neil R. Gordon, President
> >
> > N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
> >
> > 87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

Donate to the PAX Campaign Committee

From: BrooklinePAX@groups.io <BrooklinePAX@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Craig Bolon via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 6:10 AM
To: BrooklinePAX@groups.io
Subject: [BrooklinePAX] Sandy Gadsby's Globe article on Brookline's town form of government

Sandy Gadsby, Brookline should remain a town and not become a city, Boston Globe, June 23, 2025
http://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

Since its founding in 1705, the town of Brookline has been governed by a Select Board and a Town Meeting, which in 1915 became the first representative town meeting in Massachusetts -- a group of citizens elected to participate in town meeting. We are now the largest representative town meeting town in the Commonwealth and have always been proud of the citizen participation in town government. However, we are in the throes of a town-wide discussion as to whether we should convert to some form of city government, and there is a signature campaign to start the charter commission process that may ultimately give voters an opportunity to make such a change.

I was a town meeting member for 40 years, 13 as vice chair of the town's finance committee and 27 as town moderator. I have attended every town meeting but one since 1980. While our form of government isn't perfect, I have been generally impressed with the way the present system works, including its management of a fiscal structural deficit that has existed since Proposition 2-1/2, the state's tax cap law, was enacted in 1980. I am in favor of retaining a representative town meeting and am skeptical about the potential advantages of converting to either a mayor-city council or a city council-city manager form of government.

The usual criticisms of Brookline's form of government consist of several general (and largely unquantifiable) categories of purported failure, especially in accountability, transparency and leadership. I do not believe that there is any material difference. Select boards and representative town meetings are as accountable to voters as a mayor and city councilors, and their government proceedings are as transparent. The select board and its chair provide political leadership in much the same manner as a city council and mayor.

One area where a city government ordinarily **surpasses a town government is in efficiency**, because of the concentration of decision-making in a city. However, if Brookline were to convert to a city form of government, many things would remain the same. Thanks largely to the skill of our town administrators over the years, the departments would be carried forward to the city council and its subcommittees. Electoral turnout in local elections would continue to depend on the number of competitive races for office and the importance of ballot questions. **The extraordinary panorama of opportunities for Brookline citizen involvement through appointive, elective and voluntary boards and committees could be preserved.**

Some changes that would occur if Brookline became a city could be detrimental, particularly for citizen participation in municipal governance. Gone would be the 255 positions in our representative town meeting, replaced by a few seats on a city council. Gone would be the 30 positions on our advisory finance committee and the important role it plays in legislative decision-making. Gone would be the extensive use of the citizen petition, which often constitutes half of our town meeting agenda. Although many city charters have provisions for citizen initiatives, these are in practice relatively infrequent and often disposed of by a municipal department rather than considered by the city council.

Legislative and executive power in a city would be concentrated in a mayor or city manager and a city council with many consequences, not all of which would be positive. The change could well improve governmental efficiency. However, the cost of running for a citywide or even district council seat would greatly exceed the minimal or nonexistent **cost of running for representative town meeting.**

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To:	kevin4brookline@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; brooklinepax@groups.io
Cc:	jjmargolis@yahoo.com; cbolon@verizon.net; neil@nrgordon.com; jvanderkay@gmail.com
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] Sandy Gadsby"s Globe article on Brookline"s town form of government
Date:	Tuesday, June 24, 2025 10:10:44 PM

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[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] [CAUTION] This email originated from a sender outside of the Town of Brookline mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 1:16:38 AM

Thanks, Sandy, but I have a question. You say that we are the largest town in Massachusetts with a representative town meeting. But we have also been told that Plymouth is larger than Brookline, and according to Wikipedia, which I checked just now, Plymouth also has a representative town meeting. Am I missing something?

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John Bassett
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617 543 7747

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A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 1:16:44 AM

Thanks, Sandy, but I have a question. You say that we are the largest town in Massachusetts with a representative town meeting. But we have also been told that Plymouth is larger than Brookline, and according to Wikipedia, which I checked just now, Plymouth also has a representative town meeting. Am I missing something?

On 6/23/2025 4:06 PM, Sandy Gadsby via groups.io wrote:

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Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 1:20:22 AM

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 3:46:22 AM
Attachments: 9551BC4E-F058-46E4-9A0E-6EA667C6E1DC.pdf

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Yes. The time for town meetings has come and gone.

Brookline needs a more efficient, accountable government

By Jeffrey M. Berry, Catherine Donaher, and Lisa Shatz

Jeffrey M. Berry is a professor emeritus of political science at Tufts University. Catherine Donaher is the retired principal at Catherine Donaher & Associates. Lisa Shatz is a professor emeritus of electrical engineering at Suffolk University.

Brookline has the dubious distinction of being the largest municipality in Massachusetts that is not a city. As a town, it has no mayor and no city council. Instead, it is governed by town meeting, an antiquated form of government unsuited to a community of 63,000 people.

Town meeting had its origins in New England villages during colonial times. Residents would gather for a night or two and resolve issues large and small — the town budget and a new well might be the major items on the agenda. As towns grew and it was no longer feasible to allow all adult citizens to participate, the open town meeting was replaced by representative town meeting. In this form of government, a large citizen legislature is elected — 255 representatives in Brookline's case. Town meetings normally convene just twice a year.

For the past 16 months, the three of us sat on a Brookline town committee tasked with comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the representative town meeting form with two other forms of municipal government: the mayor-city council and city council-city manager. After taking testimony from experts, studying the historical record, and generating nine original research papers on municipal government, the committee issued a set of recommendations in April. Some of our colleagues favored preserving the town meeting. We concluded, however, that it is time for Brookline to go through the charter commission process to design a more modern form of government.

The town meeting in Brookline is often defended as a type of participatory democracy. It is anything but. It is representative democracy in which elected officials act on behalf of their constituents. In principle there is nothing wrong with that — our national government and our state government are representative democracies. In Brookline,

though, our electoral structure does not work to maximize the influence of voters over their elected representatives.

We see three fundamental problems with the electoral system in Brookline:

Elections should be simple and straightforward. Massachusetts towns like Brookline hold annual municipal elections every spring. Not surprisingly, turnout in Massachusetts town elections is very low, sometimes below 20 percent of registered voters and rarely above 30 percent.

Each of Brookline's 17 precincts elects 15 members to town meeting — five each year, as those elected serve three-year terms. There are many other offices on the ballot, including library trustees and constables. For most Brookline voters, town meeting elections are obscure, as they have little visibility and it's difficult to know how the candidates differ from one another. As such, these elections do not offer a mirror of public opinion but largely reflect familiarity with some of one's neighbors.

Government should be transparent.A primary reason why Brookline elections are problematic is because the town's government is complex. In addition to the town meeting, Brookline has a select board, a five-member elected body that is quasi-legislative and quasi-administrative. Its res- ponsibilities are complicated, and it is not clear to the average voter how its authority is distinct from that of town meeting. There is also a town administrator who runs day-to-day operations but also shares some executive powers, which adds to the confusion.

There is little reason to believe that representative town meeting government offers superior performance over a city form of government. The town meeting format makes it more difficult for voters to understand who in the Brookline government is in charge of what. Confusion is never a characteristic of good government.

Elections should maximize accountability. Those who want to maintain the representative town meeting form of government argue that those elected are held accountable by the very fact that they are up for reelection every three years. In this interpretation, if we don't like how our policy makers are performing, we can use the ballot to kick them out of office.

Accountability is not an either/or attribute, however. Accountability rests on knowing what our policy makers stand for, and Brookline's convoluted election system works against this.

Taken together, these shortcomings make it harder for Brookline to take effective action on pressing local problems, such as increasing our supply of affordable housing and strengthening the town's finances.

The arguments we heard for keeping the town meeting are weak. Some claim that doing away with it would mean a loss of citizen participation, as its 255 members would no longer have a role in government. But all types of municipalities have active citizens, and there are plenty of other ways for people who care about Brookline to volunteer and participate.

The town meeting form of governance is a romantic vestige of an earlier and simpler time. In a large community such as Brookline, with meetings that go on for many nights and are poorly attended by ordinary citizens, it's challenging to discern the very structure of decision-making.

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To:	David Lescohier; lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc:	andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:40:21 AM

As a response to that libel on Zohran Mamdani, see this:

https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/24/opinion/antisemitism-new-york-city-mayor.html?unlocked_article_code=1.Rk8.aRK_.d5CHJSr3M1R7&smid=url-share

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 07:45:38 AM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi TMMs,

Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.

Likely, you've all heard that Zohran Mamdani won the primary. "His proposals include government-run grocery stores, a rent freeze for more than two million New Yorkers, and free bus rides. Mamdani's housing plan alone would cost $100 billion—only slightly less than the entire size of this year's city budget."

I know some of you support socialism but do you believe that these proposals can have any practical benefits and, if implemented, would more likely result in an even more unlivable NYC?

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Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

Ps: please no ad hominem attacks. I've had more than my share on this listserv.

On Jun 24, 2025, at 5:39 PM, David Lescohier <david@lescohier.com> wrote:

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Maintenance was not carried out.

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(Recently, there have been some reforms.)

But this is an extreme example of how ideology can lead to dysfunctional, unsustainable management of housing stock.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 24, 2025 5:13:22 PM EDT, "Andrew Fischer via groups.io" <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony
>
> Thank you
>
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> >
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> > Private markets have so completely failed to provide adequate housing that residents are demanding government action to fix the problem wealth concentration caused
> >
> > On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
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> > > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.

> Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Lescohier via groups.io <david=lescohier.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com; Lisa Shatz via groups.io
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:41:50 AM

Hello Lisa,

As always, I appreciate your thoughts. I don't need to agree. Agree or not, your comments are thoughtful and clear.

Yes, I would throw cold water on an extreme socialist approach. But by the same token, an extreme, unbridled capitalist approach a la Musk, etc et al deserves a firehouse of opposition as well.

I lean toward the Fabians.

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We had a perspective during FDR's time now gone. I believe that there must be a formidable shake-up before civility may be restored.

And as with the Great Depression, there may be a great deal of suffering before we get there.

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TMM P11

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	lisafshatz@gmail.com; Lisa Shatz via groups.io; David Lescohier
Cc:	andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:51:53 AM

So, your professors slept late?

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Fran Perler via groups.io <Fran.Pct8=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:05:36 AM

Hi Joe,

I believe the Brookline library allows online access to many newspapers , including the Globe. Check their site.

Take care,
Fran Perler
Precinct 8 TMM
Advisory Committee

Council on Aging, Citizen Member

Friends of Hall Pond, Board Member

……
Sent from Fran's iPad. Language errors courtesy of autocorrect.

On Jun 25, 2025, at 1:20 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:

I wish I could read the opposing view, but the Globe doesn't allow us non-subscribers to read things from its website any more.

On 6/23/2025 9:54 PM, Anthony Flint via groups.io wrote:

> I'm quite embarrassed, I didn't realize there were dueling op-eds! Quite clever of the Globe, in point-counterpoint fashion.
>
> https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city-government/
>
> Anthony Flint
> Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
> Vice President High Street Hill Association
> 617-930-1044
> Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
> Host | Land Matters podcast
> Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
> @anthonyflint
>
> On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 5:37 PM Anthony Flint via groups.io

<anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Here's the link to the op-ed:
>
> https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/
>
> It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.
>
> It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..
>
> Anthony Flint
> Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
> Vice President High Street Hill Association
> 617-930-1044
> Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
> Host | Land Matters podcast
> Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
> @anthonyflint
>
> On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Dear TMMs:
> >
> > The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.
> >
> > Regards, Sandy Gadsby
> >
> > ---
> >
> > **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> > **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> > **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> > **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> > **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
> >
> > Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the

> Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.
>
> John Bassett
> 26 Searle Ave.
> Brookline, MA 02445
> 617 543 7747

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: David Lescohier; lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:23:01 AM

Yes, I'm a socialist.

Perhaps the most humane and successful time for housing here was post WWII. Then public money subsidized both private and publicly owned development. Affordable and better quality housing dramatically increased. The programs then were Federal. Sadly local and private maintenance was not always adequate and some or many, both public and private developments deteriorated over time.

I remember the struggles to keep rent control. It was imperfect. But it kept housing costs down. Since NYC already has rent stabilization implementing rent control may be easier.

Two of our kids who work in Manhattan, a teacher and an editor can afford to live in Manhattan because of rent stabilization. And they hope Mamdani will be an improvement.

John Bassett
p6

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 07:45:38 AM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Hi TMMs,
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> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
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Wow!!

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TMM P11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:27:27 AM

I don't think Zohran is anti-Israel as Lisa says, but he is certainly anti-Israel *policies*. Which, to be honest, most people of conscience are at this point (including former Israeli prime ministers).

I know it's hard for many in our community to see Israel in a negative light, but at some point you need to take stock of what they are doing and ask yourself - "are these actions defenseable?". Incredibly, many on this board will still say *yes*. But I would argue that this is becoming more of a fringe position as time goes on.

It really is heartening to know that NYC made this choice - they chose a good guy who supports equality in Palestine vs. a corrupt politician (and Netanyahu lawyer) with tons of PAC money. I hope our elected officials take notice.

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Lescohier via groups.io <david=lescohier.com@groups.io>
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com; Jon Margolis via groups.io; lisafshatz@gmail.com; Lisa Shatz via groups.io
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:35:31 AM

While the doors opened at 9:00, not much happened until after lunch. It was London. It's a different culture , another world that I was privileged to explore.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 25, 2025 8:51:48 AM EDT, "Jon Margolis via groups.io" <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> So, your professors slept late?
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: omarmabrouk@hotmail.com
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:52:00 AM

I be am thrilled to learn that Mamdani and Omar support Israel's right to exist and only object to the policies of Netanyahu and his coalition.

Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11.

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 9:27 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I don't think Zohran is anti-Israel as Lisa says, but he is certainly anti-Israel *policies*. Which, to be honest, most people of conscience are at this point (including former Israeli prime ministers).
>
> I know it's hard for many in our community to see Israel in a negative light, but at some point you need to take stock of what they are doing and ask yourself - "are these actions defenseable?". Incredibly, many on this board will still say *yes*. But I would argue that this is becoming more of a fringe position as time goes on.
>
> It really is heartening to know that NYC made this choice - they chose a good guy who supports equality in Palestine vs. a corrupt politician (and Netanyahu lawyer) with tons of PAC money. I hope our elected officials take notice.
>
> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: David Lescohier; lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:58:21 AM

Yes, I'm a socialist.

The most productive and humane period for housing was after WWII. Federal money then supported both private and public development of good quality and affordable housing. Sadly inadequate local and private maintenance allowed some or many developments to deteriorate over time. But the Federal programs worked.

I remember the struggles over rent control. It was imperfect. But it kept housing costs down. NYC already has rent stabilization. It may not be hard to move to rent control.

Our children who work in Manhattan, a teacher and an editor can afford to live in Manhattan without a car because of rent stabilization. And they hope Mamdani will be an improvement.

John Bassett
p6

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 07:45:38 AM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Hi TMMs,
>
> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
>
> Likely, you've all heard that Zohran Mamdani won the primary. "His proposals include government-run grocery stores, a rent freeze for more than two million New Yorkers, and free bus rides. Mamdani's housing plan alone would cost $100 billion—only slightly less than the entire size of this year's city budget."
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> I know some of you support socialism but do you believe that these proposals can have any practical benefits and, if implemented, would more likely result in an even more unlivable NYC?
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>
> I think his candidacy should serve as a wake up call for all of us to prioritize easing the cost of housing by increasing the supply of both market rate and subsidized housing and adding more commerce to increase Brookline's tax revenue.
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> I don't know if a city form of government will better enable achieving these goals but I think perhaps a mayor or city manager with a vision like Somerville's Joe Curtatone, would be better equipped to push through controversy and red tape to begin to address these issues.
>
> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

Ps: please no ad hominem attacks. I've had more than my share on this listserv.

On Jun 24, 2025, at 5:39 PM, David Lescohier <david@lescohier.com> wrote:

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After Cuba's revololution, Fidel announced that since Cubans had been paying rent to landlords, landlords were no longer entitled to own their properties. Henceforth, tenants were to become the owners of their apartments.

Wow!!

But in the long term, tenants encountered many problems. They were stuck with their apartments. Buying and selling was henceforth illegal. If they had children, for example, and needed more room, this was blocked.

Maintenance was not carried out.

No one was responsible for repairs, which ultimately led to multi unit buildings deteriorating to the point of collapse. Even now, a dozen buildings a day are lost in Havana.

(Recently, there have been some reforms.)

But this is an extreme example of how ideology can lead to dysfunctional, unsustainable management of housing stock.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 24, 2025 5:13:22 PM EDT, "Andrew Fischer via groups.io" <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony
>
> Thank you
>
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> >
> > I'm going to re-rewrite this headline
> >
> > Private markets have so completely failed to provide adequate housing that residents are demanding government action to fix the problem wealth concentration caused

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>
> > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
> >
> > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io; joe@attorneyross.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:11:41 AM

You are correct, according to the latest censuses. We are the second largest RTM town.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 1:16 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Thanks, Sandy, but I have a question. You say that we are the largest town in Massachusetts with a representative town meeting. But we have also been told that Plymouth is larger than Brookline, and according to Wikipedia, which I checked just now, Plymouth also has a representative town meeting. Am I missing something?

On 6/23/2025 4:06 PM, Sandy Gadsby via groups.io wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
> The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.
>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me.

They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io; joe@attorneyross.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:26:32 AM

Well, this seems to be a moving target. Brookline was larger in the 2010 and 2020 census, but Plymouth may be larger as of 2023. See the summary below, with thanks to my research assistant (ChatGPT), and the usual caveats.

Maybe we can all agree that Brookline and Plymouth are two similar sized towns with Representative Town Meetings, and the largest ones on MA.

Here's the population data for **Brookline** and **Plymouth**, MA for the 2010 Census, 2020 Census, and the most recent available estimates:

Brookline, MA (Town)

- **2010 Census**: 58,732 residents fred.stlouisfed.org+8brooklinema.gov+8sec.state.ma.us+8malegislature.gov
- **2020 Census**: 63,191 residents data.census.gov+2en.wikipedia.org+2malegislature.gov+2
- **2023 Estimate**: 62,962 residents malegislature.gov+12neilsberg.com+12neilsberg.com+12
- **2025 Estimate**: ~63,690 residents worldpopulationreview.com

Note: The latest official ACS 5-year estimate (2023) and forward projections place Brookline's population just below 63,000. WorldPopulationReview's 2025 projection is slightly higher (~63.7k).

Plymouth, MA (Town)

- **2010 Census**: 56,468 residentsworldpopulationreview.com+14en.wikipedia.org+14worldpopulationreview.com+14
- **2020 Census**: 61,217 residents en.wikipedia.org
- **2023 Estimate**: 65,405 residents neilsberg.com

Estimates show steady growth post-2020; the 2023 figure (65,405) reflects a 7.2% increase since the census .

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17
617-308-1952

On Jun 25, 2025, at 10:11 AM, Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 1:16 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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>
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	David Lescohier; lisafshatz@gmail.com; baswolfe@aol.com
Cc:	andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Wednesday, June 25, 2025 11:12:11 AM

Rent control works, but only in limited circumstances and for a limited time. In 1989 I rented a studio on 23rd Street in Manhattan--my next door neighbor was the Communist Party (CPUSA for those who follow such details). My apartment was rent-stabilized, but I had to pay "key money," extra cash to the vacating tenant, to get the place. That was off the books and pretty much universal in areas that were desirable (although I used to say that my building was a refuge for the halt, the lame and the weird). Two years later, when I moved back to civilization, there had been a break in the market (the savings and loan crisis) and I could not get any key money. I figured that what I saved on monthly rent at the stabilized rate--compared with the "fair market" for my place--about evened out what I had paid to get the apartment. Rent-stabilization is much better than rent control, because it allows some adjustment to the market. That's why it has survived, and rent control has not. Note, too, that it costs a considerable amount of taxpayer money to administer such a system.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 09:58:20 AM EDT, John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:

Yes, I'm a socialist.

The most productive and humane period for housing was after WWII. Federal money then supported both private and public development of good quality and affordable housing. Sadly inadequate local and private maintenance allowed some or many developments to deteriorate over time. But the Federal programs worked.

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Our children who work in Manhattan, a teacher and an editor can afford to live in Manhattan without a car because of rent stabilization. And they hope Mamdani will be an improvement.

John Bassett

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> Hi TMMs,
>
> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
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> Likely, you've all heard that Zohran Mamdani won the primary. "His proposals include government-run grocery stores, a rent freeze for more than two million New Yorkers, and free bus rides. Mamdani's housing plan alone would cost $100 billion—only slightly less than the entire size of this year's city budget."
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> I know some of you support socialism but do you believe that these proposals can have any practical benefits and, if implemented, would more likely result in an even more unlivable NYC?
>
> And, yes, he is anti-Israel, and supports the phrase "globalize the intifada" in a city with one of the world's largest Jewish populations.
>
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> I don't know if a city form of government will better enable achieving these goals but I think perhaps a mayor or city manager with a vision like Somerville's Joe Curtatone, would be better equipped to push through controversy and red tape to begin to address these issues.
>
> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11
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> Ps: please no ad hominem attacks. I've had more than my share on this listserv.
>
> > On Jun 24, 2025, at 5:39 PM, David Lescohier <david@lescohier.com> wrote:
> >
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> >
> > Hello TMMs,
> >
> > After Cuba's revololution, Fidel announced that since Cubans had been paying rent to landlords, landlords were no longer entitled to own their properties. Henceforth, tenants were to become the owners of their apartments.
> >
> > Wow!!
> >
> > But in the long term, tenants encountered many problems. They were stuck with their apartments. Buying and selling was henceforth illegal. If they had children, for example, and needed more room, this was blocked.

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No one was responsible for repairs, which ultimately led to multi unit buildings deteriorating to the point of collapse. Even now, a dozen buildings a day are lost in Havana.

(Recently, there have been some reforms.)

But this is an extreme example of how ideology can lead to dysfunctional, unsustainable management of housing stock.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

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> Anthony
>
> Thank you
>
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> >
> > I'm going to re-rewrite this headline
> >
> > Private markets have so completely failed to provide adequate housing that residents are demanding government action to fix the problem wealth concentration caused
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> > >
> > > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA
Subject: Fw: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 3:01:42 PM

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>
To: David Lescohier <david@lescohier.com>; lisafshatz@gmail.com <lisafshatz@gmail.com>
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com <andrewmfischer@gmail.com>; Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>; anthonybuono728@gmail.com <anthonybuono728@gmail.com>; TMMA List Serve <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 09:57:32 AM EDT
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor

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> p6
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Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

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David Lescohier
TMM P11

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> Anthony

Thank you

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>
> I'm going to re-rewrite this headline
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>
> > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
> >
> > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: A. Joseph Ross; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 5:03:03 PM
Attachments: 9551BC4E-F058-46E4-9A0E-6EA667C6E1DC.pdf

There is a middle ground. There are those of us who see the statutory process of voting to establish a study committee to study options and present recommendations This would be a meaningful step, either exploring how we can improve our town government processes or change our form of government. There are different forms of town government as well as city government.

"OR" is the key word. Beginning the process doesn't mean we are going change from town to city, but it is the only way of addressing the issue of form of town governance that leads to change, whether in our form of town government OR in changing or town to a city.

We have spend a great deal of time and effort discussing the issue of change in our form of government: it's time we move on to addressing what changes we need. We are no longer a small town but have grown into a large, densely populated and primarily urban municipality. Our town staff, despite their competence, professionalism and dedication, is overburdened. As a result we often cannot enforce what we pass in Town Meetiing.

There are changes we can make to improve our governance, but the only way to effect these changes is through charter reform. Let's start the process — wherever it leads.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 3:46 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi Joe,
>
> Here is the op-ed from the pro-city side:
>
> Lisa Shatz
>
> > On Jun 25, 2025, at 1:20 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:

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I wish I could read the opposing view, but the Globe doesn't allow us non-subscribers to read things from its website any more.

On 6/23/2025 9:54 PM, Anthony Flint via groups.io wrote:

> I'm quite embarrassed, I didn't realize there were dueling op-eds! Quite clever of the Globe, in point-counterpoint fashion.
>
> https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city-government/
>
> Anthony Flint
> Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
> Vice President High Street Hill Association
> 617-930-1044
> Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
> Host | Land Matters podcast
> Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
> @anthonyflint

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>
> > Here's the link to the op-ed:
> >
> > https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/
> >
> > It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.
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> >
> > Anthony Flint
> > Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
> > Vice President High Street Hill Association
> > 617-930-1044
> > Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
> > Host | Land Matters podcast

Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
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>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our

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>
> John Bassett
> 26 Searle Ave.
> Brookline, MA 02445
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A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

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Yes. The time for town meetings has come and gone.

Brookline needs a more efficient, accountable government

By Jeffrey M. Berry, Catherine Donaher, and Lisa Shatz

Jeffrey M. Berry is a professor emeritus of political science at Tufts University. Catherine Donaher is the retired principal at Catherine Donaher & Associates. Lisa Shatz is a professor emeritus of electrical engineering at Suffolk University.

Brookline has the dubious distinction of being the largest municipality in Massachusetts that is not a city. As a town, it has no mayor and no city council. Instead, it is governed by town meeting, an antiquated form of government unsuited to a community of 63,000 people.

Town meeting had its origins in New England villages during colonial times. Residents would gather for a night or two and resolve issues large and small — the town budget and a new well might be the major items on the agenda. As towns grew and it was no longer feasible to allow all adult citizens to participate, the open town meeting was replaced by representative town meeting. In this form of government, a large citizen legislature is elected — 255 representatives in Brookline's case. Town meetings normally convene just twice a year.

For the past 16 months, the three of us sat on a Brookline town committee tasked with comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the representative town meeting form with two other forms of municipal government: the mayor-city council and city council-city manager. After taking testimony from experts, studying the historical record, and generating nine original research papers on municipal government, the committee issued a set of recommendations in April. Some of our colleagues favored preserving the town meeting. We concluded, however, that it is time for Brookline to go through the charter commission process to design a more modern form of government.

The town meeting in Brookline is often defended as a type of participatory democracy. It is anything but. It is representative democracy in which elected officials act on behalf of their constituents. In principle there is nothing wrong with that — our national government and our state government are representative democracies. In Brookline,

though, our electoral structure does not work to maximize the influence of voters over their elected representatives.

We see three fundamental problems with the electoral system in Brookline:

Elections should be simple and straightforward. Massachusetts towns like Brookline hold annual municipal elections every spring. Not surprisingly, turnout in Massachusetts town elections is very low, sometimes below 20 percent of registered voters and rarely above 30 percent.

Each of Brookline's 17 precincts elects 15 members to town meeting — five each year, as those elected serve three-year terms. There are many other offices on the ballot, including library trustees and constables. For most Brookline voters, town meeting elections are obscure, as they have little visibility and it's difficult to know how the candidates differ from one another. As such, these elections do not offer a mirror of public opinion but largely reflect familiarity with some of one's neighbors.

Government should be transparent.A primary reason why Brookline elections are problematic is because the town's government is complex. In addition to the town meeting, Brookline has a select board, a five-member elected body that is quasi-legislative and quasi-administrative. Its res- ponsibilities are complicated, and it is not clear to the average voter how its authority is distinct from that of town meeting. There is also a town administrator who runs day-to-day operations but also shares some executive powers, which adds to the confusion.

There is little reason to believe that representative town meeting government offers superior performance over a city form of government. The town meeting format makes it more difficult for voters to understand who in the Brookline government is in charge of what. Confusion is never a characteristic of good government.

Elections should maximize accountability. Those who want to maintain the representative town meeting form of government argue that those elected are held accountable by the very fact that they are up for reelection every three years. In this interpretation, if we don't like how our policy makers are performing, we can use the ballot to kick them out of office.

Accountability is not an either/or attribute, however. Accountability rests on knowing what our policy makers stand for, and Brookline's convoluted election system works against this.

Taken together, these shortcomings make it harder for Brookline to take effective action on pressing local problems, such as increasing our supply of affordable housing and strengthening the town's finances.

The arguments we heard for keeping the town meeting are weak. Some claim that doing away with it would mean a loss of citizen participation, as its 255 members would no longer have a role in government. But all types of municipalities have active citizens, and there are plenty of other ways for people who care about Brookline to volunteer and participate.

The town meeting form of governance is a romantic vestige of an earlier and simpler time. In a large community such as Brookline, with meetings that go on for many nights and are poorly attended by ordinary citizens, it's challenging to discern the very structure of decision-making.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jklein728@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; joe@attorneyross.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 5:13:59 PM

Similar population-wise. Not geographically.

Regina Frawley 16

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 10:26 AM Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Well, this seems to be a moving target. Brookline was larger in the 2010 and 2020 census, but Plymouth may be larger as of 2023. See the summary below, with thanks to my research assistant (ChatGPT), and the usual caveats.
>
> Maybe we can all agree that Brookline and Plymouth are two similar sized towns with Representative Town Meetings, and the largest ones on MA.
>
> Here's the population data for **Brookline** and **Plymouth**, MA for the 2010 Census, 2020 Census, and the most recent available estimates:
>
> ---
>
> ## Brookline, MA (Town)
>
> - **2010 Census**: 58,732 residents fred.stlouisfed.org+8brooklinema.gov+8sec.state.ma.us+8malegislature.gov
> - **2020 Census**: 63,191 residents data.census.gov+2en.wikipedia.org+2malegislature.gov+2
> - **2023 Estimate**: 62,962 residents malegislature.gov+12neilsberg.com+12neilsberg.com+12
> - **2025 Estimate**: ~63,690 residents worldpopulationreview.com
>
> **Note:** The latest official ACS 5-year estimate (2023) and forward projections place Brookline's population just below 63,000. WorldPopulationReview's 2025 projection is slightly higher (~63.7k).
>
> ---
>
> ## Plymouth, MA (Town)
>
> - **2010 Census**: 56,468 residentsworldpopulationreview.com+14en.wikipedia.org+14worldpopulationreview.com+14
> - **2020 Census**: 61,217 residents en.wikipedia.org
> - **2023 Estimate**: 65,405 residents neilsberg.com
>
> Estimates show steady growth post-2020; the 2023 figure (65,405) reflects a 7.2% increase since the census .
>
> ---
>
> Jonathan Klein, TMM P17
> 617-308-1952

On Jun 25, 2025, at 10:11 AM, Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

You are correct, according to the latest censuses. We are the second largest RTM town.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io<joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 1:16 AM
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Thanks, Sandy, but I have a question. You say that we are the largest town in Massachusetts with a representative town meeting. But we have also been told that Plymouth is larger than Brookline, and according to Wikipedia, which I checked just now, Plymouth also has a representative town meeting. Am I missing something?

On 6/23/2025 4:06 PM, Sandy Gadsby via groups.io wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served

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John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: A. Joseph Ross; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 7:26:25 PM

As I have pointed out on this list-serve, more than once, the statutory process for deciding on a charter commission is undemocratic. Indeed, it is anti-democratic.

If you want me to explain that again, let us know.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 05:03:03 PM EDT, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

There is a middle ground. There are those of us who see the statutory process of voting to establish a study committee to study options and present recommendations This would be a meaningful step, either exploring how we can improve our town government processes or change our form of government. There are different forms of town government as well as city government.

“OR” is the key word. Beginning the process doesn’t mean we are going change from town to city, but it is the only way of addressing the issue of form of town governance that leads to change, whether in our form of town government OR in changing or town to a city.

We have spend a great deal of time and effort discussing the issue of change in our form of government: it’s time we move on to addressing what changes we need. We are no longer a small town but have grown into a large, densely populated and primarily urban municipality. Our town staff, despite their competence, professionalism and dedication, is overburdened. As a result we often cannot enforce what we pass in Town Meetiing.

There are changes we can make to improve our governance, but the only way to effect these changes is through charter reform. Let’s start the process — wherever it leads.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 3:46 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi Joe,

Here is the op-ed from the pro-city side:

Lisa Shatz

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 1:20 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:

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I wish I could read the opposing view, but the Globe doesn't allow us non-subscribers to read things from its website any more.

On 6/23/2025 9:54 PM, Anthony Flint via groups.io wrote:

> I'm quite embarrassed, I didn't realize there were dueling op-eds! Quite clever of the Globe, in point-counterpoint fashion.
>
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Anthony Flint
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Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
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@anthonyflint

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> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
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A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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– *Groucho Marx*

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	KSmith1450@aol.com
Cc:	Brookline TMMA
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Two Op-Eds of Interest in Today"s Boston Globe: Brookline"s Form of Government
Date:	Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:27:24 PM

I have never seen a community where so many people are so 100 percent convinced that they're right.

Anthony Flint\
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 8:33 PM Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> I want to make sure you're all aware that today's Boston Globe features two opinion pieces commissioned as a point/counterpoint on Brookline's form of government:
>
> - Sandy Gadsby's "Brookline would lose too much by converting to a city
>   - https://tinyurl.com/25dp29sj
> - Jeffrey Berry, Catherine Donaher, and Lisa Shatz's "The time for town meetings in Brookline has come and gone"
>   - https://tinyurl.com/ynwnacca
>
> Both articles offer thoughtful perspectives and are worth a read.
>
> Kim Smith
> TMM 6

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Peter Frumkin via groups.io <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	david@lescohier.com
Cc:	andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; lisafshatz@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:27:29 PM

David, I'm not sure why you would choose Cuba as your exampe of socialism when you could have chosen Norway, France or even a place like Singapore that seems to have a pretty good mix of free market behavior and still provides everyone with housing, healthcare and education.

I guess the point is that the word "socialism" has many meanings, as do the words "democracy" and "capitalism." As others have said, let's not make socialism some sort of bogeyman.

Peter Frumkin
TMM 3

> On Jun 24, 2025, at 5:39 PM, David Lescohier via groups.io <david=lescohier.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hello TMMs,
>
> After Cuba's revololution, Fidel announced that since Cubans had been paying rent to landlords, landlords were no longer entitled to own their properties. Henceforth, tenants were to become the owners of their apartments.
>
> Wow!!
>
> But in the long term, tenants encountered many problems. They were stuck with their apartments. Buying and selling was henceforth illegal. If they had children, for example, and needed more room, this was blocked.
>
> Maintenance was not carried out.
>
> No one was responsible for repairs, which ultimately led to multi unit buildings deteriorating to the point of collapse. Even now, a dozen buildings a day are lost in Havana.
>
> (Recently, there have been some reforms.)

But this is an extreme example of how ideology can lead to dysfunctional, unsustainable management of housing stock.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 24, 2025 5:13:22 PM EDT, "Andrew Fischer via groups.io" <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony
>
> Thank you
>
> > On Jun 24, 2025, at 11:25 AM, Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I'm going to re-rewrite this headline
> >
> > Private markets have so completely failed to provide adequate housing that residents are demanding government action to fix the problem wealth concentration caused
> >
> > On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
> > >
> > > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:33:18 PM

>>There are those of us who see the statutory process of voting to establish a study committee to study options …<<

There is no such statutory process aside from the voting part. MGL, as it applies to charter commissions, is silent on the notion of a commission being a "study committee." There's no statutory requirement to research, explore, or study anything.

>>… but it is the only way of addressing the issue of form of town governance that leads to change, whether in our form of town government OR in changing or town to a city.<<

No, it's not.

>> Our town staff, despite their competence, professionalism and dedication, is overburdened. As a result we often cannot enforce what we pass in Town Meeting. <<

By what magic would an overburdened staff be better able to enforce what's passed by a city council?

>>There are changes we can make to improve our governance, …<<

True (as Brookline has done from time to time).

>>… but the only way to effect these changes is through charter reform.<<

False.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 5:03 PM
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com

Cc: A. Joseph Ross <joe@attorneyross.com>; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
> The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.
>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town

> Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.
>
> John Bassett
> 26 Searle Ave.
> Brookline, MA 02445
> 617 543 7747

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Peter Frumkin via groups.io <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc:	David Lescohier; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:50:29 PM

Lisa, can you tell us exactly what you mean when you use the word "socialism?"

Peter
TMM 3

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 7:45 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi TMMs,
>
> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.

-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-
Groups.io Links: You receive all messages sent to this group.
View/Reply Online (#45528): https://groups.io/g/brooklinetmma/message/45528
Mute This Topic: https://groups.io/mt/113808873/4850368
Group Owner: brooklinetmma+owner@groups.io
Unsubscribe: https://groups.io/g/brooklinetmma/unsub [redacted]
-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Katha Seidman via groups.io <katha=mindspring.com@groups.io>
To: anthony.flint@gmail.com
Cc: ksmith1450@aol.com; Brookline TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Two Op-Eds of Interest in Today"s Boston Globe: Brookline"s Form of Government
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 8:58:50 PM

If I embroidered I'd make Anthony's statement into a framed sampler.

Katha Seidman
TMM P2

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:27 PM, Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I have never seen a community where so many people are so 100 percent convinced that they're right.
>
> Anthony Flint\
> Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
> Vice President High Street Hill Association
> 617-930-1044
> Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
> Host | Land Matters podcast
> Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
> @anthonyflint
>
> On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 8:33 PM Kim Smith via groups.io <KSmith1450=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Colleagues,
>
> I want to make sure you're all aware that today's Boston Globe features two opinion pieces commissioned as a point/counterpoint on Brookline's form of government:
>
> - Sandy Gadsby's "Brookline would lose too much by converting to a city
>   - https://tinyurl.com/25dp29sj
> - Jeffrey Berry, Catherine Donaher, and Lisa Shatz's "The time for town meetings in Brookline has come and gone"
>   - https://tinyurl.com/ynwnacca
>
> Both articles offer thoughtful perspectives and are worth a read.

> Kim Smith
> TMM 6

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: Lisa Shatz
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:09:16 PM

Thanks, Lisa.

On 6/25/2025 3:46 AM, Lisa Shatz wrote:

> Hi Joe,
>
> Here is the op-ed from the pro-city side:
>
> Lisa Shatz
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> > On Jun 25, 2025, at 1:20 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
> >
> > I wish I could read the opposing view, but the Globe doesn't allow us non-subscribers to read things from its website any more.
> >
> > On 6/23/2025 9:54 PM, Anthony Flint via groups.io wrote:
> >
> > > I'm quite embarrassed, I didn't realize there were dueling op-eds! Quite clever of the Globe, in point-counterpoint fashion.
> > >
> > > https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city-government/
> > >
> > > Anthony Flint
> > > Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
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> > > Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
> > > Host | Land Matters podcast
> > > Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
> > > @anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 5:37 PM Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Here's the link to the op-ed:
>
> https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/
>
> It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.
>
> It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..
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> Anthony Flint
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>
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>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM

To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.

> Brookline, MA 02445
> 617 543 7747

--
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TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: Fran Perler
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:13:29 PM

Thanks. I'll have to renew my library card, then I'll check it out.

On 6/25/2025 9:05 AM, Fran Perler wrote:

> Hi Joe,
>
> I believe the Brookline library allows online access to many newspapers , including the Globe. Check their site.
>
> Take care,
> Fran Perler
> Precinct 8 TMM
> Advisory Committee
>
> Council on Aging, Citizen Member
> Friends of Hall Pond, Board Member
> ……
> Sent from Fran's iPad. Language errors courtesy of autocorrect.
>
> On Jun 25, 2025, at 1:20 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I wish I could read the opposing view, but the Globe doesn't allow us non-subscribers to read things from its website any more.
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> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are

not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

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TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Neil Gordon
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15:18 PM

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:33 PM, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> By what magic would an overburdened staff be better able to enforce what's passed by a city council?

Don't know until we explore the idea. Maybe nothing, but why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:21:42 PM

>>… why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?<<

You ask a question that's not answered anywhere within the statutory process defined by Massachusetts General Law. Yet proponents of a charter commission continue to pitch the notion that a commission will research, study, explore, and more. None of that is in statute. Zero.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:33 PM, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:25:12 PM

While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. That is where the election of individual charter commissioners comes into play.

If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? I ask this genuinely.

If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >>... why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?<<
>
> You ask a question that's not answered anywhere within the statutory process defined by Massachusetts General Law. Yet proponents of a charter commission continue to pitch the notion that a commission will research, study, explore, and more. None of that is in statute. Zero.
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>
> Neil R. Gordon, President
>
> N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
>
> 87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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>
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Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: ranangle1@gmail.com
Cc: neil@nrgordon.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:34:56 PM

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https://brookline.news/mysterious-election-mailings-likely-violated-campaign-finance-laws-who-is-behind-them/

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 22:31 Richard Nangle via groups.io <ranangle1=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> That city government invites corruption - bought politicians - is such a strong argument, we will likely win on that.
>
> Richard Nangle
> TM 15
>
> > On Jun 25, 2025, at 9:21 PM, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > >>... why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?<<
> >
> > You ask a question that's not answered anywhere within the statutory process defined by Massachusetts General Law. Yet proponents of a charter commission continue to pitch the notion that a commission will research, study, explore, and more. None of that is in statute. Zero.
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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:51:15 PM

So far as I can tell, what New York calls rent stabilization is what we used to call rent control.

As I recall, "Rent control" in New York involved freezing rents completely, for a couple of decades. Then someone got into office who instituted Vacancy Decontrol. And then, someone else got in who re-controlled the decontrolled units with "rent stabilization," which allowed for periodic rent increases.

Rent control as it existed in Brookline, Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and (briefly) Lynn allowed for periodic general adjustments, as well as individual adjustments of rent on specific properties on application by the landlord. When I arrived in Brookline in 1972 as a staff person at the Rent Control Board, we were just about to issue the first general adjustment. I remember taking calls from people who didn't understand why their rent was going up. Many of them would say, "I thought we had rent control." And I had to explain that rent control didn't mean rent freeze. Then, when Cambridge Rent Control issued their first general adjustment, a reporter on television said that rent control in Cambridge had come to an end.

Years later, when I learned that rent control in New York really did mean rent freeze, I thought those tenants and that TV reporter may have known something I didn't,

On 6/25/2025 9:22 AM, John Bassett via groups.io wrote:

> Yes, I'm a socialist.
>
> Perhaps the most humane and successful time for housing here was post WWII. Then public money subsidized both private and publicly owned development. Affordable and better quality housing dramatically increased. The programs then were Federal. Sadly local and private maintenance was not always adequate and some or many, both public and private developments deteriorated over time.
>
> I remember the struggles to keep rent control. It was imperfect. But it kept housing costs down. Since NYC already has rent stabilization implementing rent control may be easier.
>
> Two of our kids who work in Manhattan, a teacher and an editor can afford to live in Manhattan because of rent stabilization. And they hope Mamdani will be an improvement.
>
> John Bassett
> p6
>
> On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 07:45:38 AM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi TMMs,

Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.

Likely, you've all heard that Zohran Mamdani won the primary. "His proposals include government-run grocery stores, a rent freeze for more than two million New Yorkers, and free bus rides. Mamdani's housing plan alone would cost $100 billion—only slightly less than the entire size of this year's city budget."

I know some of you support socialism but do you believe that these proposals can have any practical benefits and, if implemented, would more likely result in an even more unlivable NYC?

And, yes, he is anti-Israel, and supports the phrase "globalize the intifada" in a city with one of the world's largest Jewish populations.

I think his candidacy should serve as a wake up call for all of us to prioritize easing the cost of housing by increasing the supply of both market rate and subsidized housing and adding more commerce to increase Brookline's tax revenue.

I don't know if a city form of government will better enable achieving these goals but I think perhaps a mayor or city manager with a vision like Somerville's Joe Curtatone, would be better equipped to push through controversy and red tape to begin to address these issues.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

Ps: please no ad hominem attacks. I've had more than my share on this listserv.

> On Jun 24, 2025, at 5:39 PM, David Lescohier <david@lescohier.com> wrote:
>
> CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
>
> Hello TMMs,
>
> After Cuba's revololution, Fidel announced that since Cubans had been paying rent to landlords, landlords were no longer entitled to own their properties. Henceforth, tenants were to become the owners of their apartments.
>
> Wow!!
>
> But in the long term, tenants encountered many problems. They were stuck with their apartments. Buying and selling was henceforth illegal. If they had children, for example, and needed more room, this was blocked.
>
> Maintenance was not carried out.
>
> No one was responsible for repairs, which ultimately led to multi unit

buildings deteriorating to the point of collapse. Even now, a dozen buildings a day are lost in Havana.

(Recently, there have been some reforms.)

But this is an extreme example of how ideology can lead to dysfunctional, unsustainable management of housing stock.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 24, 2025 5:13:22 PM EDT, "Andrew Fischer via groups.io" <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony
>
> Thank you
>
> > On Jun 24, 2025, at 11:25 AM, Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I'm going to re-rewrite this headline
> >
> > Private markets have so completely failed to provide adequate housing that residents are demanding government action to fix the problem wealth concentration caused
> >
> > On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
> > >
> > > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:55:45 PM

I've long opposed Likud policies, but I have to say, I can't blame the Israeli electorate after for so long they supported people who pushed a 2-state solution as a path to peace, when the Palestinians have kept resolutely opposed a 2-state solution. "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" is what they say in English, but "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be Arab" is what they say in Arabic.

On 6/25/2025 9:27 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io wrote:

> I don't think Zohran is anti-Israel as Lisa says, but he is certainly anti-Israel *policies*. Which, to be honest, most people of conscience are at this point (including former Israeli prime ministers).
>
> I know it's hard for many in our community to see Israel in a negative light, but at some point you need to take stock of what they are doing and ask yourself - "are these actions defenseable?". Incredibly, many on this board will still say *yes*. But I would argue that this is becoming more of a fringe position as time goes on.
>
> It really is heartening to know that NYC made this choice - they chose a good guy who supports equality in Palestine vs. a corrupt politician (and Netanyahu lawyer) with tons of PAC money. I hope our elected officials take notice.
>
> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 11:06:41 PM

As I said, what New York calls rent stabilization is what we have always called rent control. We have never had "rent control" in Massachusetts as that term is understood in New York.

On 6/25/2025 11:12 AM, Jon Margolis via groups.io wrote:

> Rent control works, but only in limited circumstances and for a limited time. In 1989 I rented a studio on 23rd Street in Manhattan--my next door neighbor was the Communist Party (CPUSA for those who follow such details). My apartment was rent-stabilized, but I had to pay "key money," extra cash to the vacating tenant, to get the place. That was off the books and pretty much universal in areas that were desirable (although I used to say that my building was a refuge for the halt, the lame and the weird). Two years later, when I moved back to civilization, there had been a break in the market (the savings and loan crisis) and I could not get any key money. I figured that what I saved on monthly rent at the stabilized rate--compared with the "fair market" for my place--about evened out what I had paid to get the apartment. Rent-stabilization is much better than rent control, because it allows some adjustment to the market. That's why it has survived, and rent control has not. Note, too, that it costs a considerable amount of taxpayer money to administer such a system.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

> On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 09:58:20 AM EDT, John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Yes, I'm a socialist.
>
> The most productive and humane period for housing was after WWII. Federal money then supported both private and public development of good quality and affordable housing. Sadly inadequate local and private maintenance allowed some or many developments to deteriorate over time. But the Federal programs worked.
>
> I remember the struggles over rent control. It was imperfect. But it kept housing costs down. NYC already has rent stabilization. It may not be

hard to move to rent control.

Our children who work in Manhattan, a teacher and an editor can afford to live in Manhattan without a car because of rent stabilization. And they hope Mamdani will be an improvement.

John Bassett
p6

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 07:45:38 AM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Hi TMMs,
>
> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
>
> Likely, you've all heard that Zohran Mamdani won the primary. "His proposals include government-run grocery stores, a rent freeze for more than two million New Yorkers, and free bus rides. Mamdani's housing plan alone would cost $100 billion—only slightly less than the entire size of this year's city budget."
>
> I know some of you support socialism but do you believe that these proposals can have any practical benefits and, if implemented, would more likely result in an even more unlivable NYC?
>
> And, yes, he is anti-Israel, and supports the phrase "globalize the intifada" in a city with one of the world's largest Jewish populations.
>
> I think his candidacy should serve as a wake up call for all of us to prioritize easing the cost of housing by increasing the supply of both market rate and subsidized housing and adding more commerce to increase Brookline's tax revenue.
>
> I don't know if a city form of government will better enable achieving these goals but I think perhaps a mayor or city manager with a vision like Somerville's Joe Curtatone, would be better equipped to push through controversy and red tape to begin to address these issues.
>
> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11
>
> Ps: please no ad hominem attacks. I've had more than my share on this listserv.
>
> > On Jun 24, 2025, at 5:39 PM, David Lescohier <david@lescohier.com> wrote:
> >
> > CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
> >
> > Hello TMMs,

After Cuba's revololution, Fidel announced that since Cubans had been paying rent to landlords, landlords were no longer entitled to own their properties. Henceforth, tenants were to become the owners of their apartments.

Wow!!

But in the long term, tenants encountered many problems. They were stuck with their apartments. Buying and selling was henceforth illegal. If they had children, for example, and needed more room, this was blocked.

Maintenance was not carried out.

No one was responsible for repairs, which ultimately led to multi unit buildings deteriorating to the point of collapse. Even now, a dozen buildings a day are lost in Havana.

(Recently, there have been some reforms.)

But this is an extreme example of how ideology can lead to dysfunctional, unsustainable management of housing stock.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 24, 2025 5:13:22 PM EDT, "Andrew Fischer via groups.io" <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony
>
> Thank you
>
> > On Jun 24, 2025, at 11:25 AM, Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I’m going to re-rewrite this headline
> >
> > Private markets have so completely failed to provide adequate housing that residents are demanding government action to fix the problem wealth concentration caused
> >
> > On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:18 AM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
> > >
> > > Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 11:18:50 PM

Just a couple of years ago, someone published an article describing how plentiful and affordable housing is in Vienna, due to social programs that started early in the 20th Century, when Austria was a monarchy. Those programs somehow survived the fall of the monarchy, then Nazism, and finally the post-war republic.

On 6/25/2025 8:27 PM, Peter Frumkin via groups.io wrote:

> David, I'm not sure why you would choose Cuba as your exampe of socialism when you could have chosen Norway, France or even a place like Singapore that seems to have a pretty good mix of free market behavior and still provides everyone with housing, healthcare and education.
>
> I guess the point is that the word "socialism" has many meanings, as do the words "democracy" and "capitalism." As others have said, let's not make socialism some sort of bogeyman.
>
> Peter Frumkin
> TMM 3
>
> > On Jun 24, 2025, at 5:39 PM, David Lescohier via groups.io <david=lescohier.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Hello TMMs,
> >
> > After Cuba's revololution, Fidel announced that since Cubans had been paying rent to landlords, landlords were no longer entitled to own their properties. Henceforth, tenants were to become the owners of their apartments.
> >
> > Wow!!
> >
> > But in the long term, tenants encountered many problems. They were stuck with their apartments. Buying and selling was henceforth illegal. If they had children, for example, and needed more room, this was blocked.
> >
> > Maintenance was not carried out.
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to multi unit buildings deteriorating to the point of collapse. Even now, a dozen buildings a day are lost in Havana.

(Recently, there have been some reforms.)

But this is an extreme example of how ideology can lead to dysfunctional, unsustainable management of housing stock.

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 24, 2025 5:13:22 PM EDT, "Andrew Fischer via groups.io" <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Anthony
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> Thank you
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> > On Jun 24, 2025, at 11:25 AM, Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
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> >
> > > NYC is a cautionary tale that if Brookline

> and Greater Boston do not address the housing crisis, voters will turn to socialists.
>
> Lisa Shatz, TMM p 11

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	Peter Frumkin via groups.io
Cc:	David Lescohier; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Wednesday, June 25, 2025 11:40:12 PM

Socialist states have centralized economies like China, Viet Nam, Cuba and Venezuela.

Lisa Shatz
> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:50 PM, Peter Frumkin via groups.io <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
>
>
> Lisa, can you tell us exactly what you mean when you use the word "socialism?"
>
> Peter
> TMM 3
>
>> On Jun 25, 2025, at 7:45 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
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>> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
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Group Owner: brooklinetmma+owner@groups.io
Unsubscribe: https://groups.io/g/brooklinetmma/unsub [redacted]
-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	Lisa Shatz
Cc:	Peter Frumkin via groups.io; David Lescohier; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Thursday, June 26, 2025 12:11:15 AM

I understand the sentiment, I really do.

But "socialism equals central planning" is a tough definition to pin down. If socialism just means "a centralized economy," we have to ask what that actually looks like.

Does the percentage of public-sector employment make a country more socialist? In Venezuela, about 24 percent of workers are employed by the public sector. In Israel, it's over 31 percent — placing it among the top ten in terms of public-sector employment.

I'm not saying this as a gotcha, but to encourage people to think about ideologies not just as checklists, but as frameworks for who should hold power.

I'm a social democrat. That means I want the people to have power — and I want democratic institutions to be able to say, "People are struggling with rent. Let's pool resources and build housing." Or, "Climate change threatens human life as we know it. Let's use public investment to build a renewable energy future."

Yes, these are "centrally planned" decisions. But they're guided by democratic will and constitutional restraint.

So is that socialism? Is it socialism to say, "There's no grocery store with fresh produce for ten blocks — maybe the city should run a nonprofit market"? If that's socialism, fine. But maybe we should stop worrying so much about the label and start asking what kind of world we want to build — and how we get there.

Being afraid of central planning or public investment just hands more power to private actors who already own more than most of us can imagine.

Lately I've been reading and writing a lot about the Erie Canal, built between 1817 and 1825. It was centrally planned by a board appointed by elected officials. That act of central planning turned New York City into a global economic hub. It was so successful it sent Montreal into recession and made Governor DeWitt Clinton so popular that Ohio counties nominated him for president.

Was Clinton a socialist? No. But he believed in using the power of government to build something big, useful, and lasting.

Anyway, this got longer than I meant it to. If nothing else, I hope it made you think — or at least taught you a little about the Erie Canal.

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 11:40 PM Lisa Shatz <lisafshatz@gmail.com> wrote:

> Socialist states have centralized economies like China, Viet Nam, Cuba and Venezuela.

> Lisa Shatz
>
>
> > On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:50 PM, Peter Frumkin via groups.io
> <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
> >
> >
> > Lisa, can you tell us exactly what you mean when you use the word “socialism?”
> >
> > Peter
> > TMM 3
> >
> >> On Jun 25, 2025, at 7:45 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io
> <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >>
> >> Hi TMMs,
> >>
> >> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
> >
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> >

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com; kevin4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 6:55:22 AM

" what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? "

Ahhh. As the poet said, "There's the rub." It would be one thing if voters were asked, "Should Brookline elect a charter commission?" and nothing more, and then, if the yes votes carry the day, members of the commission were to be elected at a later date. But that's not what happens.

What happens is that the question of whether to have a commission at all and the putative commissioners are on the same ballot. That puts a huge thumb on the scale. That is why the process is not just undemocratic but anti-democratic.

Because candidates have to run for the possible commission slots at the same time as whether to have a commission at all is being decided, those who believe the commission to be unnecessary are faced with having a millstone around their necks. In effect--unless they are to ignore whether to have a commission at all--such candidates need to have a platform that says, "Vote against the commission, but if the voters make the wrong choice, vote for me." Or, "Vote for me for a job I don't want." (If anyone reading this thinks that is not a real handicap, I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell at a really good price.)

Remember, too, that candidates for the commission would have to run town-wide. That means raising serious campaign money. One of the features of Town Meeting is that we can run while spending little or no money on the campaign. Candidates for Selectboard, on the other hand, need some serious cash in hand--look at figures raised in the recent election. People running for charter commission would face a similar challenge.

Who is most likely to contribute to a charter-commission campaign? Those who are disinterested proponents of "good government" (whatever that means), or those believe that a 5, 7 or 9-memberl city council would be easier to influence than our 256-member Town Meeting. Developers spring to mind. Other interested persons as well. So, the campaign for a commission would be very different from what we now see for the town's legislature, and very much balanced in favor of those with a profit motive in mind.

Proponents of the charter commission have already decided that Brookline should be a city. They make that plain, even though they sometimes argue that the commission should--and would--be an open give-and-take among various ideas. Again, I have that bridge I'd be willing to sell.

One further note that I may expand on in the future: Brookline already faces great challenges in finding the money we need to maintain our high standard of

government. The battle over a charter commission would be a substantial drain on our people and politics (in addition to wallets) at a time when we have plenty on our plate already.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 10:25:11 PM EDT, Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. That is where the election of individual charter commissioners comes into play.

If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? I ask this genuinely.

If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >>… why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?<<
>
> You ask a question that's not answered anywhere within the statutory process defined by Massachusetts General Law. Yet proponents of a charter commission continue to pitch the notion that a commission will research, study, explore, and more. None of that is in statute. Zero.
>
> Regards, Neil, TMM1
>
> Neil R. Gordon, President
>
> N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:33 PM, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> By what magic would an overburdened staff be better able to enforce what's passed by a city council?

Don't know until we explore the idea. Maybe nothing, but why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	Peter Frumkin via groups.io; lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc:	David Lescohier; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Thursday, June 26, 2025 6:59:33 AM

Not all of them. Take Scandinavia, for instance.

On the other hand, there is the centralized economy that the present maladministration is pushing here.

Jonathan J. Margolis
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 11:40:12 PM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Socialist states have centralized economies like China, Viet Nam, Cuba and Venezuela.

Lisa Shatz
> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:50 PM, Peter Frumkin via groups.io <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
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>
>
> Lisa, can you tell us exactly what you mean when you use the word "socialism?"
>
> Peter
> TMM 3
>
>> On Jun 25, 2025, at 7:45 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>>
>> Hi TMMs,
>>
>> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
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>

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Richard Murphy via groups.io <brookline4ever=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: lisafshatz@gmail.com; A. Joseph Ross; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 7:18:05 AM

Thank you Andy, could not agree more!
Richard M Murphy
TMM16

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 5:03 PM Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> There is a middle ground. There are those of us who see the statutory process of voting to establish a study committee to study options and present recommendations This would be a meaningful step, either exploring how we can improve our town government processes or change our form of government. There are different forms of town government as well as city government.
>
> "OR" is the key word. Beginning the process doesn't mean we are going change from town to city, but it is the only way of addressing the issue of form of town governance that leads to change, whether in our form of town government OR in changing or town to a city.
>
> We have spend a great deal of time and effort discussing the issue of change in our form of government: it's time we move on to addressing what changes we need. We are no longer a small town but have grown into a large, densely populated and primarily urban municipality. Our town staff, despite their competence, professionalism and dedication, is overburdened. As a result we often cannot enforce what we pass in Town Meetiing.
>
> There are changes we can make to improve our governance, but the only way to effect these changes is through charter reform. Let's start the process — wherever it leads.
>
> Andrew Fischer
> Town Meeting Member
> Precinct 13
> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> 617-293-8304
>
> > On Jun 25, 2025, at 3:46 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Hi Joe,
> >
> > Here is the op-ed from the pro-city side:
> >
> > Lisa Shatz

On Jun 25, 2025, at 1:20 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:

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I wish I could read the opposing view, but the Globe doesn't allow us non-subscribers to read things from its website any more.

On 6/23/2025 9:54 PM, Anthony Flint via groups.io wrote:

> I'm quite embarrassed, I didn't realize there were dueling op-eds! Quite clever of the Globe, in point-counterpoint fashion.
>
> https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city-government/
>
> Anthony Flint
> Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
> Vice President High Street Hill Association
> 617-930-1044
> Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
> Host | Land Matters podcast
> Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
> @anthonyflint

> On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 5:37 PM Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Here's the link to the op-ed:
> >
> > https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/
> >
> > It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.
> >
> > It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
> The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.
>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator.

Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Anthony Buono
Cc: Peter Frumkin via groups.io; David Lescohier; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 7:27:10 AM

I know Israel started off as a socialist country but couldn't make their economy work and so adopted characteristics of capitalism (deregulation, privatization) that helped and they're now known as the start up nation. But Tel Aviv is as expensive as NYC and while there's lots of construction of new housing, rents and condo prices are still very high, and it's difficult to live there on an average salary.

I read that Austrian municipalities (and several other European countries as well) play a large role in providing below market housing where some people never expect to own a home and live in public housing their entire lives. Maybe more of that type of socialism could help here as well, if there is a decent supply of housing.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Jun 26, 2025, at 12:11 AM, Anthony Buono <anthonybuono728@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
>
> I understand the sentiment, I really do.
>
> But "socialism equals central planning" is a tough definition to pin down. If socialism just means "a centralized economy," we have to ask what that actually looks like.
>
> Does the percentage of public-sector employment make a country more socialist? In Venezuela, about 24 percent of workers are employed by the public sector. In Israel, it's over 31 percent — placing it among the top ten in terms of public-sector employment.
>
> I'm not saying this as a gotcha, but to encourage people to think about ideologies not just as checklists, but as frameworks for who should hold power.
>
> I'm a social democrat. That means I want the people to have power — and I want democratic institutions to be able to say, "People are struggling with rent. Let's pool resources and build housing." Or, "Climate change threatens human life as we know it. Let's use public investment to build a renewable energy future."
>
> Yes, these are "centrally planned" decisions. But they're guided by democratic

will and constitutional restraint.

So is that socialism? Is it socialism to say, “There’s no grocery store with fresh produce for ten blocks — maybe the city should run a nonprofit market”? If that’s socialism, fine. But maybe we should stop worrying so much about the label and start asking what kind of world we want to build — and how we get there.

Being afraid of central planning or public investment just hands more power to private actors who already own more than most of us can imagine.

Lately I’ve been reading and writing a lot about the Erie Canal, built between 1817 and 1825. It was centrally planned by a board appointed by elected officials. That act of central planning turned New York City into a global economic hub. It was so successful it sent Montreal into recession and made Governor DeWitt Clinton so popular that Ohio counties nominated him for president.

Was Clinton a socialist? No. But he believed in using the power of government to build something big, useful, and lasting.

Anyway, this got longer than I meant it to. If nothing else, I hope it made you think — or at least taught you a little about the Erie Canal.

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 11:40 PM Lisa Shatz <lisafshatz@gmail.com> wrote:

> Socialist states have centralized economies like China, Viet Nam, Cuba and Venezuela.
>
> Lisa Shatz
>
> > On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:50 PM, Peter Frumkin via groups.io <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
> >
> >
> > Lisa, can you tell us exactly what you mean when you use the word “socialism?”
> >
> > Peter
> > TMM 3
> >
> >> On Jun 25, 2025, at 7:45 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >>
> >> Hi TMMs,
> >>

>> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
>
>
>
>
>
>

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Davis via groups.io <jdavis=cl-lawgroup.com@groups.io>
To:	jjmargolis@yahoo.com; neil@nrgordon.com; kevin4brookline@gmail.com
Cc:	andrewmfischer@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject:	Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Thursday, June 26, 2025 7:53:42 AM

Jonathan - You're absolutely spot on. It is antidemocratic and favors the monied.

Jonathan Davis
TMM Pct. 17

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jon Margolis via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2025 6:55 AM
To: neil@nrgordon.com; kevin4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Brookline PAX <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

" what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? "

Ahhh. As the poet said, "There's the rub." It would be one thing if voters were asked, "Should Brookline elect a charter commission?" and nothing more, and then, if the yes votes carry the day, members of the commission were to be elected at a later date. But that's not what happens.

What happens is that the question of whether to have a commission at all and the putative commissioners are on the same ballot. That puts a huge thumb on the scale. That is why the process is not just undemocratic but anti-democratic.

Because candidates have to run for the possible commission slots at the same time as whether to have a commission at all is being decided, those who believe the commission to be unnecessary are faced with having a millstone around their necks. In effect--unless they are to ignore whether to have a commission at all--such candidates need to have a platform that says, "Vote against the commission, but if the voters make the wrong choice, vote for me." Or, "Vote for me for a job I don't want." (If anyone reading this thinks that is not a real handicap, I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell at a really good price.)

Remember, too, that candidates for the commission would have to run town-wide. That means raising serious campaign money. One of the features of Town Meeting is that we can run while spending little or no money on the campaign. Candidates for Selectboard, on the other hand, need some serious cash in hand--look at figures raised in the recent election. People running for charter commission would face a similar challenge.

Who is most likely to contribute to a charter-commission campaign? Those who are disinterested proponents of "good government" (whatever that means), or those believe that a 5, 7 or 9-memberl city council would be easier to influence than our 256-member Town Meeting. Developers spring to mind. Other interested persons as well. So, the campaign for a commission would be very different from what we now see for the town's legislature, and very much balanced in favor of those with a profit motive in mind.

Proponents of the charter commission have already decided that Brookline should be a city. They make that plain, even though they sometimes argue that the commission should--and would--be an open give-and-take among various ideas. Again, I have that bridge I'd be willing to sell.

One further note that I may expand on in the future: Brookline already faces great challenges in finding the money we need to maintain our high standard of government. The battle over a charter commission would be a substantial drain on our people and politics (in addition to wallets) at a time when we have plenty on our plate already.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 10:25:11 PM EDT, Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. That is where the election of individual charter commissioners comes into play.

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If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >>… why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?<<

You ask a question that's not answered anywhere within the statutory process defined by Massachusetts General Law. Yet proponents of a charter commission continue to pitch the notion that a commission will research, study, explore, and more. None of that is in statute. Zero.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:33 PM, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
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Don't know until we explore the idea. Maybe nothing, but why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc:	neil@nrgordon.com; kevin4brookline@gmail.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject:	Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:04:58 AM

Colleagues,

I agree with some of what Jon has written in his conclusion when he describes challenges in finding the money that the town needs and that there is a lot on our plate in Brookline. I appreciate that he acknowledges that there is a lot on our plate. I would argue that the "lot on our plate" includes a chronic structural deficit, town employee turnover that is much too high (and higher than neighboring cities and towns), and an insufficient amount of commercial development to raise needed revenue for municipal services.

Some TMM Colleagues have made very clear what they see to be the risks of action in moving forward with the charter process. Wherever you stand, I ask you to consider the risks of **inaction**. What if Brookline passes on an opportunity to truly examine all of the hardest things to solve on our plate? What if we miss the chance to think differently about our structural deficit, town employee turnover, and the lack of sufficient commercial development? What if we ask those questions and decide to make modest changes to our government and stay as a town? Why deny Brookline voters the chance to explore these questions? The choice not to pursue this process is more than a case for the status quo. It is a choice not to act in the face of all on our plate as leaders.

The point has been made several times that the statute on a charter commission does not require public debate and conversation about its proposals and ideals. If I feel confident about anything in Brookline, I am most confident that we will continue to have robust conversations about these questions and, in fact, that some of those conversations have already begun.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 5:55 AM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> " what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? "
>
> Ahhh. As the poet said, "There's the rub." It would be one thing if voters were asked, "Should Brookline elect a charter commission?" and nothing more, and then, if the yes votes carry the day, members of the commission were to be elected at a later date. But that's not what happens.

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Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

>>… why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?<<

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Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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> Andrew Fischer
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> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> 617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:06:44 AM

>> Who is most likely to contribute to a charter-commission campaign? <<

Just a side note: While there are statutory limits on donations to candidates' committees, there are no such limits on contributions to ballot question committees.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
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87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
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Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

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Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marion Freedman-Gurspan via groups.io <freedgur=aol.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:33:56 AM

Washington D.C. also has rent stabilization for certain older buildings. Rent increases are limited to 5% a year.
Marion Freedman-Gurspan TMM09

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: kevin4brookline@gmail.com
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:33:58 AM

>> While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. <<

Except that the pro-city folks continue to tell us that it *will* happen, without any statutory basis for that claim. The City Charter Campaign states, *inter alia*, that a charter commission is "… a body of nine members elected by the voters **to study local governance**." (emphasis added here, but try to find that provision in Massachusetts General Law).

>>If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different?<<

If you believe the pro-city Op-Ed, and the papers submitted by the Moderator's Committee, you'll find the authors don't at all believe that Brookline voters thoughtfully choose their elected officials. Among the false statements in the Committee's record: Town elections aren't about issues, and Town Meeting races are "beauty contests." Will voters be any more thoughtful in electing a Charter Commission?

>>If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them. <<

There will be a campaign filled with campaign promises, of course. But taken on its face, your comment is contrary to the stated claim of the city charter proponents that an elected commission will necessarily research/study local governance in an objective manner, as already noted.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: BrooklinePAX@groups.io <BrooklinePAX@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:25 PM
To: neil@nrgordon.com

Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. That is where the election of individual charter commissioners comes into play.

If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? I ask this genuinely.

If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >>… why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?<<
>
> You ask a question that's not answered anywhere within the statutory process defined by Massachusetts General Law. Yet proponents of a charter commission continue to pitch the notion that a commission will research, study, explore, and more. None of that is in statute. Zero.
>
> Regards, Neil, TMM1
>
> Neil R. Gordon, President
> N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
> 87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
> (508) 265-1362
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
> **Sent:** Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
> **To:** Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
> **Cc:** BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
> **Subject:** Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:33 PM, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> By what magic would an overburdened staff be better able to enforce what's passed by a city council?

Don't know until we explore the idea. Maybe nothing, but why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of David Lescohier via groups.io <david=lescohier.com@groups.io>
To: Anthony Buono; Lisa Shatz
Cc: Peter Frumkin via groups.io; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:37:12 AM

Hello,

Precisely, Anthony, the question is not ideology. It's who should hold power. This applies to Brookline as much on as on a worldwide scale. Here's a worldwide perspective, but in Brookline, wealth and power are driving Brookline also in concerning and mostly hidden ways.

Town Meeting is our ⁴only formidable check and balance because it is unlikely that 255 members are for sale or can be bought.

So, as we consider the future of Brookline governance, I urge that we keep this in mind.

Anthony recounts the history of the Eire Canal. By the 1890s, the robber baron trusts brought on a crisis. The muck rakers exposed their corruption. The Teddy and Taft brought reforms. Teddy, like Biden, split the movement. Then came the Great Depression and FDR.

Today,

"Billionaires alone — about 3,000 people worldwide, the overwhelming majority of whom are men — have gained $6.5 trillion since 2015, according to the report, which was released ahead of an international conference in Spain on development financing.
This immense concentration of wealth has translated to political power in a movement towards oligarchy that sees ultra-wealthy individuals able to shape political and economic decision-making in ways that increase their wealth."

David Lescohier
TMM P11

On June 26, 2025 12:11:00 AM EDT, Anthony Buono <anthonybuono728@gmail.com> wrote:

> I understand the sentiment, I really do.
>
> But "socialism equals central planning" is a tough definition to pin down. If socialism just means "a centralized economy," we have to ask what that actually looks like.
>
> Does the percentage of public-sector employment make a country more socialist? In Venezuela, about 24 percent of workers are employed by the public sector. In Israel, it's over 31 percent — placing it among the top ten in terms of public-sector employment.
>
> I'm not saying this as a gotcha, but to encourage people to think about ideologies not just as checklists, but as frameworks for who should hold power.

I'm a social democrat. That means I want the people to have power — and I want democratic institutions to be able to say, "People are struggling with rent. Let's pool resources and build housing." Or, "Climate change threatens human life as we know it. Let's use public investment to build a renewable energy future."

Yes, these are "centrally planned" decisions. But they're guided by democratic will and constitutional restraint.

So is that socialism? Is it socialism to say, "There's no grocery store with fresh produce for ten blocks — maybe the city should run a nonprofit market"? If that's socialism, fine. But maybe we should stop worrying so much about the label and start asking what kind of world we want to build — and how we get there.

Being afraid of central planning or public investment just hands more power to private actors who already own more than most of us can imagine.

Lately I've been reading and writing a lot about the Erie Canal, built between 1817 and 1825. It was centrally planned by a board appointed by elected officials. That act of central planning turned New York City into a global economic hub. It was so successful it sent Montreal into recession and made Governor DeWitt Clinton so popular that Ohio counties nominated him for president.

Was Clinton a socialist? No. But he believed in using the power of government to build something big, useful, and lasting.

Anyway, this got longer than I meant it to. If nothing else, I hope it made you think — or at least taught you a little about the Erie Canal.

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 11:40 PM Lisa Shatz <lisafshatz@gmail.com> wrote:

> Socialist states have centralized economies like China, Viet Nam, Cuba and Venezuela.
>
> Lisa Shatz
>
> > On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:50 PM, Peter Frumkin via groups.io
> > <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
> >
> >
> > Lisa, can you tell us exactly what you mean when you use the word "socialism?"
> >
> > Peter
> > TMM 3
> >
> >> On Jun 25, 2025, at 7:45 AM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io
> >> <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

>>
>> Hi TMMs,
>>
>> Thank you, David for throwing cold water on those who think that socialism is the answer to our affordable housing crisis.
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Town Hall power outage
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:37:35 AM

Good morning.

Is the Town Hall power outage specific to the building, or is the whole area out? I'm curious if this is an infrastructure issue, or a typical grid issue…?

Thanks,

Carolyn Thall
Pct 16

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Group Owner: brooklinetmma+owner@groups.io
Unsubscribe: https://groups.io/g/brooklinetmma/unsub [redacted]
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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Peter Frumkin via groups.io <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc:	Peter Frumkin via groups.io; David Lescohier; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:43:16 AM

But Democratic Socialist states (and the Mayor elect is that) have a different balance of central planning and free-market activities. Almost every single country in Europe has a vibrant Democratic Socialist party, which are often in power. And they look nothing like China, Vietnam, etc. In fact they do a much better job of taking care of their citizens than our capitalist system does (measured in terms of housing, health care, etc.)

Socialism comes on spectrum, just like capitalism and democracy. Just labeling someone as a socialist, without qualifying that, is not very useful for understanding that person.

Peter
TMM 3

> On Jun 25, 2025, at 11:39 PM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Socialist states have centralized economies like China, Viet Nam, Cuba and Venezuela.
>
> Lisa Shatz
>> On Jun 25, 2025, at 8:50 PM, Peter Frumkin via groups.io <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
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Group Owner: brooklinetmma+owner@groups.io
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Wendy Machmuller via groups.io <wendy.machmuller=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: cthall68@comcast.net
Cc: Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Town Hall power outage
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:48:39 AM

FYI, this notice went out to Town staff:

Town Hall and the Main Library in Brookline Village lost power yesterday due to a cascading failure somewhere along the Eversource lines that power the complex. Because restoring power will likely involve installing temporary generators, and the timeline for that installation is unclear, we are closing both buildings on Thursday June 26 as a precaution.

Update: Power was restored to Town Hall and the Main Library overnight via external backup generator. Because notice has already gone out to employees, and because of the possibility of continued intermittent loss of power with the backup system, we are keeping both buildings closed for public business today.

Parking and moving vehicles in the upper or library garages may also be impacted by the generators, but the electricians on-site will coordinate to ensure any vehicles.

Best,

Wendy Machmuller

110 Walnut Street, Brookline, MA 02445
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 4
Friends of Fairsted, Board of Directors
*(Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, National Park Service)**
Brookline Neighborhood Alliance, Executive Board
MSPCA, Legislative Community Advocacy Leader

"The government is bound to protect these scenes of rare sublimity from selfish destruction, that they may remain a perpetual source of enjoyment and renewal for all the people, not a spoil for the few." ~ Frederick Law Olmsted, Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report, 1865

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 8:37 AM Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:

> Good morning.
>
> Is the Town Hall power outage specific to the building, or is the whole area out? I'm curious if this is an infrastructure issue, or a typical grid issue…?
>
> Thanks,
>
> Carolyn Thall
> Pct 16

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: cthall68@comcast.net; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Town Hall power outage
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:55:54 AM

We're across the street from Town Hall and have power. Maybe it's an issue with the building.
John Bassett
p6

In a message dated 6/26/2025 8:37:34 AM Eastern Daylight Time, cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io writes:

> Good morning.
>
> Is the Town Hall power outage specific to the building, or is the whole area out? I'm curious if this is an infrastructure issue, or a typical grid issue…?
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> Thanks,
>
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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	lisafshatz@gmail.com; frumkintmm@gmail.com
Cc:	Peter Frumkin via groups.io; David Lescohier; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; Andrew Fischer via groups.io; anthonybuono728@gmail.com; TMMA List Serve
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:58:25 AM

One might question whether the United States has a capitalist society, or a form of state-socialism in which some corporate interests are heavily favored.

Jonathan J. Margolis
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 26, 2025 at 08:43:15 AM EDT, Peter Frumkin via groups.io <frumkintmm=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

But Democratic Socialist states (and the Mayor elect is that) have a different balance of central planning and free-market activities. Almost every single country in Europe has a vibrant Democratic Socialist party, which are often in power. And they look nothing like China, Vietnam, etc. In fact they do a much better job of taking care of their citizens than our capitalist system does (measured in terms of housing, health care, etc.)

Socialism comes on spectrum, just like capitalism and democracy. Just labeling someone as a socialist, without qualifying that, is not very useful for understanding that person.

Peter
TMM 3

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: kevin4brookline@gmail.com; neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 9:00:43 AM

Intentionally or not, you missed (or perhaps ignored) my main points.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee.
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Thursday, June 26, 2025 at 08:33:56 AM EDT, Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

>> While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. <<

Except that the pro-city folks continue to tell us that it *will* happen, without any statutory basis for that claim. The City Charter Campaign states, *inter alia*, that a charter commission is "… a body of nine members elected by the voters **to study local governance**." (emphasis added here, but try to find that provision in Massachusetts General Law).

>>If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different?<<

If you believe the pro-city Op-Ed, and the papers submitted by the Moderator's Committee, you'll find the authors don't at all believe that Brookline voters thoughtfully choose their elected officials. Among the false statements in the Committee's record: Town elections aren't about issues, and Town Meeting races are "beauty contests." Will voters be any more thoughtful in electing a Charter Commission?

>>If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them. <<

There will be a campaign filled with campaign promises, of course. But taken on its face, your comment is contrary to the stated claim of the city charter proponents that an elected commission will necessarily research/study local governance in an objective manner, as already noted.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: BrooklinePAX@groups.io <BrooklinePAX@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 10:25 PM
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? I ask this genuinely.

If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them.

Kevin MacKenzie

Town Meeting Member Precinct 13

Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

> >>… why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?<<

You ask a question that's not answered anywhere within the statutory process defined by Massachusetts General Law. Yet proponents of a charter commission continue to pitch the notion that a commission will research, study, explore, and more. None of that is in statute. Zero.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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>
> By what magic would an overburdened staff be better able to enforce what's passed by a city council?

Don't know until we explore the idea. Maybe nothing, but why are people so afraid to have an open mind about possibilities?

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io; "Brookline PAX"
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 9:11:58 AM

>> I would argue that the "lot on our plate" includes a chronic structural deficit, town employee turnover that is much too high (and higher than neighboring cities and towns), and an insufficient amount of commercial development to raise needed revenue for municipal services.<<

But can you present a cogent argument that any of that is caused by our representative town meeting form of government and that it would be significantly (if at all) improved if Brookline was a city?

>> What if Brookline passes on an opportunity to truly examine all of the hardest things to solve on our plate? What if we miss the chance to think differently about our structural deficit, town employee turnover, and the lack of sufficient commercial development? What if we ask those questions and decide to make modest changes to our government and stay as a town? Why deny Brookline voters the chance to explore these questions? The choice not to pursue this process is more than a case for the status quo. It is a choice not to act in the face of all on our plate as leaders.<<

That's a most fanciful description of what a charter commission *might* attempt to do, in the limited time demanded by statute in which to do it.

>>The point has been made several times that the statute on a charter commission does not require public debate and conversation about its proposals and ideals.<<

Yes, for good reason, i.e., the statute requires none of what's falsely promised as the formal process of a charter commission.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2025 8:05 AM
To: jjmargolis@yahoo.com
Cc: neil@nrgordon.com; kevin4brookline@gmail.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Brookline PAX <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Colleagues,

I agree with some of what Jon has written in his conclusion when he describes challenges in finding the money that the town needs and that there is a lot on our plate in Brookline. I appreciate that he acknowledges that there is a lot on our plate. I would argue that the "lot on our plate" includes a chronic structural deficit, town employee turnover that is much too high (and higher than neighboring cities and towns), and an insufficient amount of commercial development to raise needed revenue for municipal services.

Some TMM Colleagues have made very clear what they see to be the risks of action in moving forward with the charter process. Wherever you stand, I ask you to consider the risks of **inaction**. What if Brookline passes on an opportunity to truly examine all of the hardest things to solve on our plate? What if we miss the chance to think differently about our structural deficit, town employee turnover, and the lack of sufficient commercial development? What if we ask those questions and decide to make modest changes to our government and stay as a town? Why deny Brookline voters the chance to explore these questions? The choice not to pursue this process is more than a case for the status quo. It is a choice not to act in the face of all on our plate as leaders.

The point has been made several times that the statute on a charter commission does not require public debate and conversation about its proposals and ideals. If I feel confident about anything in Brookline, I am most confident that we will continue to have robust conversations about these questions and, in fact, that some of those conversations have already begun.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 5:55 AM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> " what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? "
>
> Ahhh. As the poet said, "There's the rub." It would be one thing if voters were asked, "Should Brookline elect a charter commission?" and nothing more, and then, if the yes votes carry the day, members of the commission were to be elected at a later date. But that's not what happens.

What happens is that the question of whether to have a commission at all and the putative commissioners are on the same ballot. That puts a huge thumb on the scale. That is why the process is not just undemocratic but anti-democratic.

Because candidates have to run for the possible commission slots at the same time as whether to have a commission at all is being decided, those who believe the commission to be unnecessary are faced with having a millstone around their necks. In effect--unless they are to ignore whether to have a commission at all--such candidates need to have a platform that says, "Vote against the commission, but if the voters make the wrong choice, vote for me." Or, "Vote for me for a job I don't want." (If anyone reading this thinks that is not a real handicap, I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell at a really good price.)

Remember, too, that candidates for the commission would have to run town-wide. That means raising serious campaign money. One of the features of Town Meeting is that we can run while spending little or no money on the campaign. Candidates for Selectboard, on the other hand, need some serious cash in hand--look at figures raised in the recent election. People running for charter commission would face a similar challenge.

Who is most likely to contribute to a charter-commission campaign? Those who are disinterested proponents of "good government" (whatever that means), or those believe that a 5, 7 or 9-memberl city council would be easier to influence than our 256-member Town Meeting. Developers spring to mind. Other interested persons as well. So, the campaign for a commission would be very different from what we now see for the town's legislature, and very much balanced in favor of those with a profit motive in mind.

Proponents of the charter commission have already decided that Brookline should be a city. They make that plain, even though they sometimes argue that the commission should--and would--be an open give-and-take among various ideas. Again, I have that bridge I'd be willing to sell.

One further note that I may expand on in the future: Brookline already faces great challenges in finding the money we need to maintain our high standard of government. The battle over a charter commission would be a substantial drain on our people and politics (in addition to wallets) at a time when we have plenty on our plate already.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 10:25:11 PM EDT, Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. That is where the election of individual charter commissioners comes into play.

If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? I ask this genuinely.

If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

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> Regards, Neil, TMM1
>
> Neil R. Gordon, President
>
> N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
>
> 87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (508) 265-1362
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
> **Sent:** Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM

To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Golden
Cc: Jonathan Margolis; Neil Gordon; kevin4brookline@gmail.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 9:27:23 AM

There are already too many "Jonathans" in this debate, but I want to add my voice to Jonathan Golden's thoughtful post below. We do have serious challenges, and we need to consider serious solutions, which could include changes in our form of government. As I think I pointed out before (and will try to refrain from repeating endlessly going forward), the Brookline voters have three opportunities to decide here: (1) whether to provide enough signatures to put the question of a Charter Commission on the ballot, (2) if there are enough signatures, whether to approve the ballot question, and elect Commissioners, and (3) whether to approve whatever the Commission recommends (if anything). In many cases, as I also pointed out before, recommendations of Charter Commissions have been defeated.

I trust the voters with those decisions, and look forward to continued discussion if and when the issue comes before the voters, though I confess I do not look forward to, and don't plan to participate in, future discussion on this list.

Cheers,
Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 26, 2025, at 8:04 AM, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Colleagues,
>
> I agree with some of what Jon has written in his conclusion when he describes challenges in finding the money that the town needs and that there is a lot on our plate in Brookline. I appreciate that he acknowledges that there is a lot on our plate. I would argue that the "lot on our plate" includes a chronic structural deficit, town employee turnover that is much too high (and higher than neighboring cities and towns), and an insufficient amount of commercial development to raise needed revenue for municipal services.
>
> Some TMM Colleagues have made very clear what they see to be the risks of action in moving forward with the charter process. Wherever you stand, I ask you to consider the risks of **inaction**. What if Brookline passes on an opportunity to truly examine all of the hardest things to solve on our plate? What if we miss the chance to think differently about our structural deficit, town employee turnover, and the lack of sufficient commercial development? What if we ask those questions and decide to make modest changes to our government and stay as a town? Why deny Brookline voters the chance to explore these questions? The choice not to pursue this process is more than a case for the status quo. It is a choice not to act in the face of all on our plate as leaders.
>
> The point has been made several times that the statute on a charter commission

does not require public debate and conversation about its proposals and ideals. If I feel confident about anything in Brookline, I am most confident that we will continue to have robust conversations about these questions and, in fact, that some of those conversations have already begun.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 5:55 AM Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

> " what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? "
>
> Ahhh. As the poet said, "There's the rub." It would be one thing if voters were asked, "Should Brookline elect a charter commission?" and nothing more, and then, if the yes votes carry the day, members of the commission were to be elected at a later date. But that's not what happens.
>
> What happens is that the question of whether to have a commission at all and the putative commissioners are on the same ballot. That puts a huge thumb on the scale. That is why the process is not just undemocratic but anti-democratic.
>
> Because candidates have to run for the possible commission slots at the same time as whether to have a commission at all is being decided, those who believe the commission to be unnecessary are faced with having a millstone around their necks. In effect--unless they are to ignore whether to have a commission at all--such candidates need to have a platform that says, "Vote against the commission, but if the voters make the wrong choice, vote for me." Or, "Vote for me for a job I don't want." (If anyone reading this thinks that is not a real handicap, I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd sell at a really good price.)
>
> Remember, too, that candidates for the commission would have to run town-wide. That means raising serious campaign money. One of the features of Town Meeting is that we can run while spending little or no money on the campaign. Candidates for Selectboard, on the other hand, need some serious cash in hand--look at figures raised in the recent election. People running for charter commission would face a similar challenge.

Who is most likely to contribute to a charter-commission campaign? Those who are disinterested proponents of "good government" (whatever that means), or those believe that a 5, 7 or 9-memberl city council would be easier to influence than our 256-member Town Meeting. Developers spring to mind. Other interested persons as well. So, the campaign for a commission would be very different from what we now see for the town's legislature, and very much balanced in favor of those with a profit motive in mind.

Proponents of the charter commission have already decided that Brookline should be a city. They make that plain, even though they sometimes argue that the commission should--and would--be an open give-and-take among various ideas. Again, I have that bridge I'd be willing to sell.

One further note that I may expand on in the future: Brookline already faces great challenges in finding the money we need to maintain our high standard of government. The battle over a charter commission would be a substantial drain on our people and politics (in addition to wallets) at a time when we have plenty on our plate already.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 10:25:11 PM EDT, Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. That is where the election of individual charter commissioners comes into play.

If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? I ask this genuinely.

If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them.

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Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President

N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.

87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446

(508) 265-1362

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Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
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--
Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Mark Penzel via groups.io <markpenzel=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 10:03:17 AM

I'd like to second this thought and highlight that one of Germany's main post-war parties, and sometimes the lead partner in a governing coalition, has been the SPD, the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany). The first chancellor it provided was Willy Brandt, who got his start as Mayor of West Berlin.

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Richard Murphy via groups.io <brookline4ever=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s EV charging station survey
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 10:51:14 AM

Hi Everyone,

We are looking for anyone's input on potential new electric vehicles locations in Town. Please read below, thank you Richard Murphy TMM16 - TBM

Some of you may already have completed this, but in case you haven't I wanted to share information on the grant we were recently awarded by Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) On-Street Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Solutions Program. This initiative aims to expand EV charging access, particularly for residents who don't have access to EV charging at their home, by installing Level 2 curbside charging stations at up to three sites in Brookline. Thanks to MassCEC's funding and technical support, the project—valued at up to $500,000—will cover all installation and setup costs at no expense to the Town or its residents.

Community input is essential to ensure these chargers are placed where they will have the greatest impact. **We are asking residents to suggest potential charging locations by using this quick Crowdsourcing Application: Submit Your EV Charging Location Ideas**. Please share this link widely with your networks to help us make EV charging more accessible for all Brookline residents. Please note, if you recently completed the Brookline Climate Action & Resiliency Plan community survey, you may have already answered these questions.

If you have additional questions about the program, we have attached a FAQ document that may be useful to reference. Thank you for your support in building a cleaner, more sustainable Brookline.

Sincerely,

Sam Downes, P.E.

Deputy Director of Engineering

Town of Brookline | DPW

333 Washington Street, Rm 411

Brookline, MA 02445

O (617) 264-6452 C (617) 201-5902

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lee Selwyn via groups.io <lselwyn=econtech.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups io
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 11:49:52 AM

Does anyone know --- or have an estimate of -- the cost that Norfolk DA Morrissey spent on the unsuccessful litigation of the second Karen Reed trial, and how much of that cost was or will be paid by Brookline as the largest municipality in Norfolk County?

Whatever it was, it has to be a record amount for getting a guilty verdict on an OUI charge.

If Brookline did or will end up paying some portion of those costs, that is yet another reason why we need to try once again to extricate ourselves from Norfolk County.

Lee L. Selwyn
Member, Advisory Committee

+1-617-510-6033

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	kevin4brookline@gmail.com
Cc:	neil@nrgordon.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject:	Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Thursday, June 26, 2025 2:30:44 PM

They are NOT ELECTED "ALL AT ONCE', but staggered, allowing "individuals" whose policy votes displease some voters, can then be voted out of office, WITHOUT disrupting the "office" itself. Select Boards will continue, as will all the other "official town wide offices/ committees".

Slates are convenient, sure. But as in local TMM Votes, they are essentially owned by those with technological skills and the energy to stuff doors. This effectively eliminates seniors, and those of lower incomes, who nonetheless have and will continue potentially to have made substantial contributions to the quality of life in Brookline.

"Democracy" was predicated on an "informed" electorate. Too many issues and votes are based on emotional (often well-meaning) limited grasp of the issue and its consequences. Just because you have advanced degrees and altogether smart or high IQs, does not mean you have a reasonable understanding of what you are voting on. Based on my witnessing, I know many do not.

We have no further to look than the national election. Well meaning, "hurt" voters who felt their values and voices have been ignored by the "left' voted hard for the current administration. The damage is done, some irreversibly.

The same can be said of any municipality. Even ours.

Regina Frawleyn16

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 10:25 PM Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> 617-293-8304

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	lselwyn@econtech.com
Cc:	brooklinetmma@groups io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date:	Thursday, June 26, 2025 2:40:42 PM

Hi Lee,

Not sure whether Town Meeting would vote to remove ourselves from Norfolk County. The "lawyers" and above all, Brookline Polic Dept. will oppose, as the courthouse is so convenient for their use. (They don't want to have to go to Dedham, a sthey've testified in the past."

Despite the fact we'll save millions annually. (even factoring in the "time loss" for police witnesses). The formula is based on land value/sales, and Brookline pays by far the highest "fee" to the COuntry.

The other means of addressing this is the Political WIll of the Select Board, which has been silent over the two times Town Meeting has voted on the issue of removing ourselves. They should be focusing on CHANGING THE FEE FORMULA. At least THAT should be done, but so far , nada. I have no idea what our "representative " from the town to the COuntry Commissioners actually does, or has done, since nothing has changed, and nothing is reported to TM. Most people hae no idea who that is, yet he/she is appointed by the Select Board.

It seems no one wants the work it wouold take to petition the COuntry COmmissioners, or change the formula at whatever level of government is needed. (Perhaps at State level?)

THank you Lee, as our reliable fiscal watchdog and voice of reason on the Advisory Commtitee.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 11:49 AM Lee Selwyn via groups.io <lselwyn=econtech.com@groups.io> wrote:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lee Selwyn via groups.io <lselwyn=econtech.com@groups.io>
To: Regina Frawley
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 2:58:12 PM

Regina,

If I recall correctly, the issue of the Brookline District Court was raised the last time that TM addressed the matter of exiting Norfolk County. My recollection is that it was pointed out the location of the court in Brookline is a State matter, not a county matter, so exiting Norfolk County would not have any effect on that Same for the Registry of Deeds.

It was also pointed out that the costs of several other counties, including (if I recall) Middlesex, are paid directly by the state, not by the cities and towns. So pushing the legislature to revise the funding mechanism nor Norfolk is yet another strategy to consider.

Lee

Lee L. Selwyn
Economics and Technology, Inc.
100 Franklin Street, Suite 602
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

+1-617-598-2222

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Lee Selwyn
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 3:04:41 PM

Yes, state level, we agree. But the "will" starts locally. Then., to our State reps. Can someone get the Select Board to start the ball rolling? We need the advocacy. Whilst nothing precludes the state reps from acting, I'm sure they'd like a "sense of the town leadership" on that.

That doesn't exclude a change in the formula. THAT MUST BE DONE. Access to the COunty school for agriculture doesn't justify the cost awssessment. Is the formula also only at the state level?

Regina

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 2:58 PM Lee Selwyn <lselwyn@econtech.com> wrote:

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Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 11:49 AM Lee Selwyn via groups.io <lselwyn=econtech.com@groups.io> wrote:

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>
> Lee L. Selwyn
> Member, Advisory Committee
>
> +1-617-510-6033
>
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Regina Frawley
Cc: neil@nrgordon.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 3:16:21 PM

Regina,

Every election cycle going forward there will be at least 1 Select Board member, 3 School Committee members, 4 Library Trustees, and 1 Constable on the ballot all at once.

That is what I was referring to.

Kevin MacKenzie
Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 14:30 Regina Frawley <ginatmma@gmail.com> wrote:

> They are NOT ELECTED "ALL AT ONCE', but staggered, allowing "individuals" whose policy votes displease some voters, can then be voted out of office, WITHOUT disrupting the "office" itself. Select Boards will continue, as will all the other "official town wide offices/ committees".
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> Slates are convenient, sure. But as in local TMM Votes, they are essentially owned by those with technological skills and the energy to stuff doors. This effectively eliminates seniors, and those of lower incomes, who nonetheless have and will continue potentially to have made substantial contributions to the quality of life in Brookline.
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> "Democracy" was predicated on an "informed" electorate. Too many issues and votes are based on emotional (often well-meaning) limited grasp of the issue and its consequences. Just because you have advanced degrees and altogether smart or high IQs, does not mean you have a reasonable understanding of what you are voting on. Based on my witnessing, I know many do not.
>
> We have no further to look than the national election. Well meaning, "hurt" voters who felt their values and voices have been ignored by the "left' voted hard for the current administration. The damage is done, some irreversibly.
>
> The same can be said of any municipality. Even ours.
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> Regina Frawleyn16

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 10:25 PM Kevin MacKenzie via groups.io <kevin4brookline=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> While it is not mandated by the statute, it can still happen. That is where the election of individual charter commissioners comes into play.
>
> If Brookline voters can thoughtfully choose members of the Select Board, School Committee, Library Trustees, Constables, and five Town Meeting Members (and

sometimes more!) all at once, what would make electing members of the charter commission any different? I ask this genuinely.

If a majority of voters want candidates who are openly pro-city, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who will do research and study the issue, they'll elect them. If they want candidates who are pro-town, they'll elect them.

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Town Meeting Member Precinct 13
Commission for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Community Relations - Chair

On Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 21:21 Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io> wrote:

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> Regards, Neil, TMM1
>
> Neil R. Gordon, President
>
> N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
>
> 87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
>
> (508) 265-1362
>
> ---
>
> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Andrew Fischer via groups.io
> **Sent:** Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
> **To:** Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
> **Cc:** BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>

Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Kevin MacKenzie
Cc: neil@nrgordon.com; andrewmfischer@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 3:19:26 PM

Glad you clarified. I try to be a stickler for written/word accuracy.

Regina Frawley 16

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Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2025 9:15 PM
To: Neil Gordon <neil@nrgordon.com>
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX <BrooklinePAX@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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andrewmfischer@gmail.com
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lee Cooke Childs via groups.io <lee.cookechilds=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: neil@nrgordon.com
Cc: andrewmfischer@gmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io; Brookline PAX
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 4:32:12 PM

Lee Cooke Childs
Realtor
Notary Public
Chobee Hoy Group
Compass
1330 Boylston St. 2nd Floor
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Cell Phone: 617-851-2494

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 10:27:30 PM

If folks are interested, the Bipartisan Policy Center is hosting a webinar on "rent regulation: (aka rent control, rent stabilization) on July 10th. https://bipartisanpolicy.org/event/rent-regulation-in-practice-economic-insights-and-regional-perspectives/

It would be good to have updated data and insights on this to inform our deliberations.

-Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 10:03 AM Mark Penzel via groups.io <markpenzel=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:

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--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025 10:27:34 PM

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Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] [CAUTION] This email originated from a sender outside of the Town of Brookline mail system. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 12:52:32 AM

It's more complicated than that. Not only does the state pay the costs of Middlesex and most of the other counties in the state, but the County Commissioners in those counties have been abolished. The only counties that still have existing county governments are in the Southeast part of the state: Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable, Nantucket, and Dukes. Of those, Barnstable functions as a regional government for the Cape, and Dukes does the same for Martha's Vineyard and the Elisabeth Islands. Nantucket County consists only of the Town of Nantucket, and the Select Board of the Town are the County Commissioners.

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On 6/26/2025 2:57 PM, Lee Selwyn wrote:

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> Lee
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> Lee L. Selwyn
> Economics and Technology, Inc.
> 100 Franklin Street, Suite 602
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--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Elizabeth Childs via groups.io <elizabethchilds=me.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 9:57:43 AM

Dear Joe,

You are absolutely correct about this issue with Norfolk County. Our contribution to the County's budget is set by the state and unless the County is dissolved, any change that Brookline could make independently is extremely difficult and unrealistic. Yes, we as a community contribute the largest share to the County because of Brooklines land values.

I am the representative from Brookline to the Norfolk County Advisory Board for the past 8 years and as of July 1 will end my 2 year term as Chair of the Norfolk County Advisory Board (NCAB). I have served as Vice Chair, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Clerk, but my primary work at the County was to push for and serve on an operational audit and financial restructuring which moved the County from a structural deficit to a balanced budget and created a rainy day fund and a capital investment fund. It is my privilege to represent Brookline on this Board and proud of my work to make the County more fiscally efficient and responsible with municipal contributions.

Brookline does contribute more than it receives from County government, but I can assure you that when Brookline needs something from the County, I strongly advocate for and expect that the County will respond, which they do. One example of this is Brookline's large ARPA portion which was administered by the County. The rules for these funds were significantly more restrictive than the direct municipal ARPA funds, and Brookline needed considerable help from the County to receive its full share, which it did, after a considerable amount of pushing from yours truly.

Brookline could take more advantage of County services. The County supports veterans, operates the public President's golf course in Quincy, which also has tennis courts, summer camp, and a lovely clubhouse, manages and oversees the Norfolk Agricultural High School, where Brookline students could attend at significantly lower cost than what we spend per student in Brookline, provides surveying services which Brookline uses, has a weights and measures program that communities can access, and maintains the Brookline Court, in addition to all the County based operations that Joe delineates below. Our neighboring communities receive great value from the County. Brookline could receive more. We have no students at Norfolk Agricultural High School and have not for many years.

Perhaps it would be helpful for Town Meeting Members, if I gave a brief primer on County government/budgeting/services to the TMMA? I could invite our excellent County Director, John Cronin, and one of the County Commissioners to join me in explaining what the County is and does. We may not believe that Norfolk County is necessary, but unless or until it is dissolved, I would encourage Brookline to get the most that it can from Norfolk County regional services, and it is in our best interest for the County to operate efficiently and soundly.

Please feel free to call me if anyone has any questions about Norfolk County. My cell phone is 617-851-8704.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Childs
TMM-04

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: elizabethchilds@me.com
Cc: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 10:34:25 AM

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To: joslinmurphy16@gmail.com
Cc: elizabethchilds@me.com; joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 10:38:06 AM

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: leroseman@gmail.com
Cc: joslinmurphy16@gmail.com; elizabethchilds@me.com; joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 10:55:44 AM

My understanding is courts are entirely state run and funded, except that some (but not all) courthouses in some counties (including Norfolk Superior, but not Brookline District) are owned by the counties and leased to the state, so the state pays all costs. DAs, Sheriffs, and Registers of Deeds are elected by county, but that's only a geographic designation — it has nothing to do with funding or function — all funding comes from the state, and they are subject to oversight and regulation by state officials (AG for DAs, EOPS for sheriffs, Secretary of State for Registers of Deeds). The functions of Norfolk county relate to certain roads, a golf course (operated under concession), an agricultural school, owning and maintaining certain courthouses leased to the state and a couple of other buildings, and maybe a couple of other things, but not much. Abolishing county government, as has been done for most of the state, likely wouldn't save much for Brookline — I believe the amounts paid by municipalities to cover county government costs get factored into the local aid formula, to even out what the state pays for equivalent costs in most of the state that no longer has county government.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

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Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 11:25:31 AM

I agree with Lynda and Joslin.

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Please feel free to call me if anyone has any questions about Norfolk County. My cell phone is 617-851-8704.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Childs
TMM-04

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It's more complicated than that. Not only does the state pay the costs of Middlesex and most of the other counties in the state, but the County Commissioners in those counties have been abolished. The only counties that still have existing county governments are in the Southeast part of the state: Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable, Nantucket, and Dukes. Of those, Barnstable functions as a regional government for the Cape, and Dukes does the same for Martha's Vineyard and the Elisabeth Islands. Nantucket County consists only of the Town of Nantucket, and the Select Board of the Town are the County Commissioners.

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>
> Lee

Lee L. Selwyn
Economics and Technology, Inc.
100 Franklin Street, Suite 602
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

+1-617-598-2222

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> TMM Pct 16
> Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA
>
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> – *Groucho Marx*

--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Harry Friedman via groups.io <spinmarty=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Lynda Roseman; rcvben@earthlink.net
Cc: Joslin Murphy; elizabethchilds@me.com; joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 12:01:31 PM

This is a great idea, and speaking for the TMMA, we will arrange with Elizabeth to present this programme.

Harry Friedman
TMMA Corresponding Secretary
TMM Precinct 12

On Friday, June 27, 2025 at 11:25:30 AM EDT, The Benkas via groups.io <rcvben=earthlink.net@groups.io> wrote:

I agree with Lynda and Joslin.

Carla Benka
TMM, Pct. 14

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 10:38 AM, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Thanks, Elizabeth!
> I would be interested in attending. I bet most of us would benefit.
> Lynda Roseman, P 14
>
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A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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– *Groucho Marx*

--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16


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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Pam Roberts via groups.io <pamelala58=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: elizabethchilds@me.com
Cc: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 12:29:36 PM

“We have no students at Norfolk Agricultural High School and have not for many years. “

Respectfully, this is not true. My daughter, who will be a senior at university this fall, graduated from Norfolk Aggie in 2022. She had a glorious experience. Norfolk Aggie is much more of a holistic place, in which the student do a lot of hands-on stuff, as well as all of the math, sciences, and English language arts. She is a Wildlife Management major, and is very excited about her future. Her acceptance there was possible because of our being part of Norfolk County. And I do believe there was a senior at the school when she was a freshman, and a freshman when she was a senior.

I honestly think more kids from Brookline should explore it as an alternative to Brookline High School. That was a terrific place for my two sons, but simply isn’t for everyone.

Pam Roberts
TMM precinct 2

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Elizabeth Childs via groups.io <elizabethchilds=me.com@groups.io>
To: Pam Roberts
Cc: joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 12:42:00 PM

Dear Pam,

I am thrilled that your daughter had a good experience at Norfolk Aggie, and I, too, wish more students would take advantage of Norfolk Aggie. Currently, Brookline has 0 students at Norfolk Aggie, compared with some of the smaller municipalities in the County which have 30 or more students at Norfolk Aggie. I am so glad that your family took advantage of this tremendous County resource.

Elizabeth Childs
TMM-04

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: elizabethchilds@me.com
Cc: Pam Roberts; joe@attorneyross.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 12:54:15 PM

Agree! My neighbor's son attended Norfolk Aggie and had a wonderful experience there.
Joslin (P16)

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 12:42 PM Elizabeth Childs via groups.io <elizabethchilds=me.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: pamelala58@yahoo.com
Cc: elizabethchilds@me.com; A. Joseph Ross; TMMA List Serve
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 1:37:36 PM

How do Brookline students get to Norfolk Aggie?

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: omarmabrouk@hotmail.com
Cc: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 4:25:00 PM
Attachments: image.png

Dear TMMs,

Another instance of the antisemitic slogan “Free Palestine” was found in my neighborhood, on the corner of Thorndike and Winchester:





This same slogan was shouted by the murderer of a young Jewish couple in DC and by an Egyptian who torched elderly Jews in Boulder. It was also on a brick thrown through the window of the Butcherie last week, and was shouted by the criminal who last year stabbed a young Jewish man in Brooklyn.

I would also like to call your attention to the email below that TMM Omar Mabrouk sent to me last year when I complained about graffiti with the same slogan.

Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!
>
> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

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FREE

PALESTINE

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 5:03:39 PM

Hi Lisa. First of all, I really do not appreciate being called a blatant anti-semite by a fellow TMM. It's hurtful, unconstructive and borders on slander. I'm far from being an anti-semite,, not that you care, but I'd like to state it. Your issue is that you simply cannot disentangle my opposition to the state of Israel's policies towards the Palestinian people with the religion of Judaism. I don't think slandering me because of your inability to make this distinction is fair. Also, thank you for re-posting my old post - I love to be reminded of the absurdity in this town. I do have a few questions for you though -

Does Palestine have a right to exist?
Do Palestinians have a right to defend themselves?
Should we ban the word Palestine all together?

Your fellow Brookline resident and colleague in TM,

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Carol hillman via groups.io <chillman96=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 5:28:01 PM
Attachments: image.png

Could we all please take a step back and reflect on the fact that concerns about Palestinians does not make one an anti semite. The phrase " free Palestine " is a political statement not an anti semitic statement
Perhaps no more on this platform please ? There is already too much anger in this world
Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 4:25 PM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs,
>
> Another instance of the antisemitic slogan "Free Palestine" was found in my neighborhood, on the corner of Thorndike and Winchester:
>
> 
>



This same slogan was shouted by the murderer of a young Jewish couple in DC and by an Egyptian who torched elderly Jews in Boulder. It was also on a brick thrown through the window of the Butcherie last week, and was shouted by the criminal who last year stabbed a young Jewish man in Brooklyn.

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Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io

<omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

Groups.io Links:

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FREE

PALESTINE

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Akiva Leibowitz via groups.io <akival=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: omar mabrouk; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 5:40:52 PM

Talmudic and Mishanaic texts emphasize the gravity of slander and public shaming: *"Anyone who humiliates another in public, it is as though he were spilling blood" (*Babylonian Talmud , Tractate of Bava Metzia).

I think would be most appropriate to publicly apologize for this unfortunate, unfounded slander of a fellow TMM as antisemite. Such discourse should not be legitimized in this group.

Only then (although this is probably not the appropriate forum to do so) - would it be reasonable to engage in discussion regarding the differentiation between legitimate political, emancipatory and anti-oppressive slogans such as “Free Palestine” and real antisemitism.

Shabbat Shalom
Akiva
TMM PCT11

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 4:24 PM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Dear TMMs,
>
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Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

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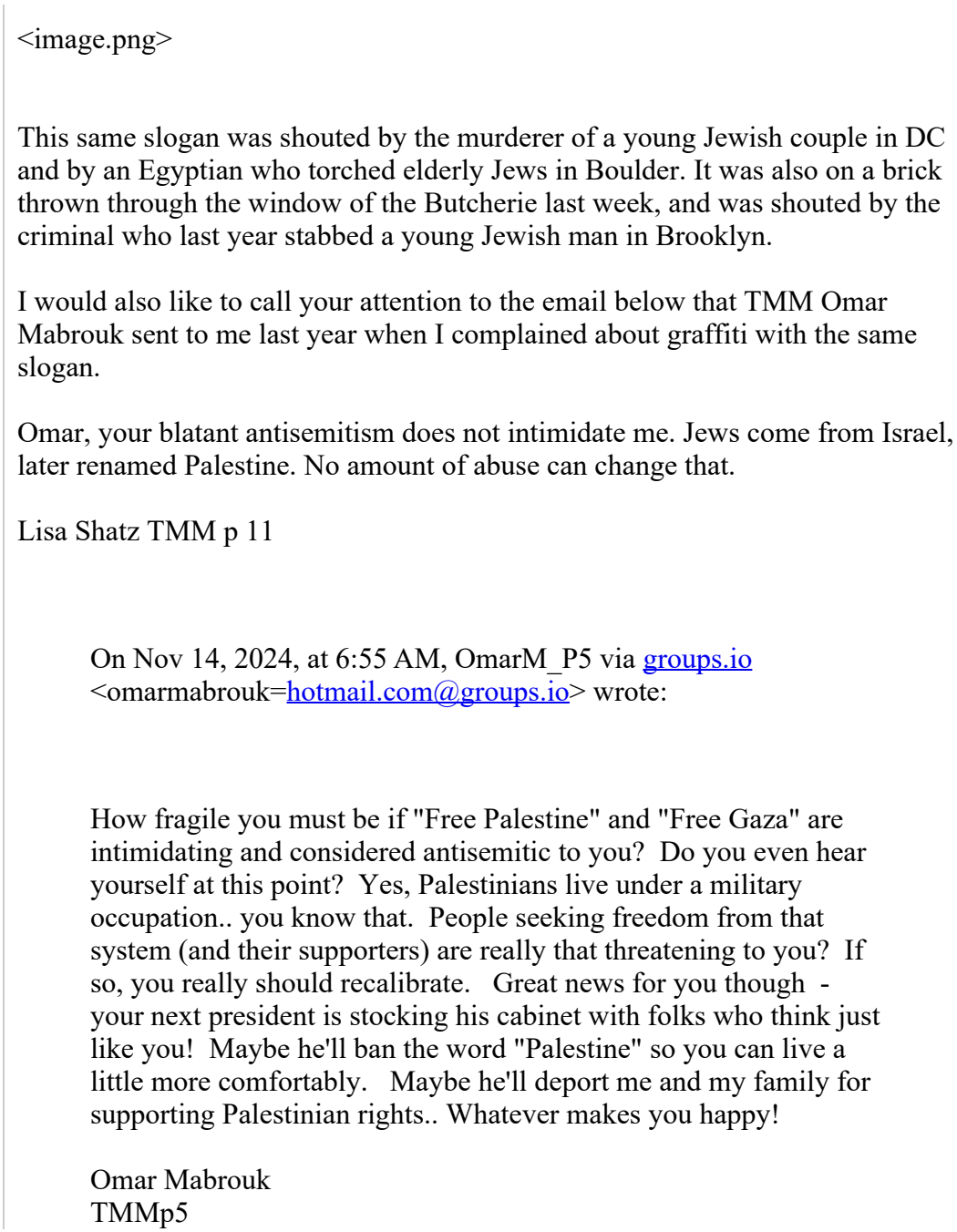
From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Carol hillman
Cc: omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 6:34:42 PM

Carol:

"Free Palestine " implies that Jews are illegitimately occupying the land of Israel and denies that Israel is the ancestral homeland of the Jews. It is not a call for peaceful coexistence — two lands—Israel and Palestine— existing side by side—but a rallying cry for violence against Jews, which is evident from all the recent attacks against Jews by people screaming "Free Palestine" while physically harming and even murdering innocent Jews.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 5:28 PM, Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com> wrote:
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>
> Carol Hillman
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> chillman96@gmail.com
> 287 Kent St., Apt. 2
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> 617-513-9384
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> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Carol hillman; lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 7:29:10 PM

Lisa,

Perhaps you have forgotten, but in 1947 the founders of the state of Israel agreed to partition of the land that the British had called Palestine. So, the founders of Israel agreed that there should be a Palestine (if one smaller than what the British colonial administration had described). And for the first 60 years of Israel's existence, the idea of what is generally called a two-state solution was the state's policy. One of those states was to be Palestine.

If we want to discuss what is implied--but not stated--by words used, one might suggest that your latest post calls for the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza (a position, I am sorry to say, espoused by too many Israelis). I trust you did not mean to say that.

Name-calling works both ways. I suggest that we all at least agree to refrain from it, and also to take this subject off the TMMA list-serve, where it clearly does not belong.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 27, 2025 at 06:34:42 PM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

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Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

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TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

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> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11
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>
> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Jonathan Margolis
Cc: Carol hillman; omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 7:48:01 PM

Jonathan,

I support a two state solution if the Palestinians would agree to it. How you can construe that I implied that I support expulsion of Palestinians, is beyond me. However, the slogan “Free Palestine “ suggests the expulsion of Jews from Israel.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 7:29 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
>
> Lisa,
>
> Perhaps you have forgotten, but in 1947 the founders of the state of Israel agreed to partition of the land that the British had called Palestine. So, the founders of Israel agreed that there should be a Palestine (if one smaller than what the British colonial administration had described). And for the first 60 years of Israel's existence, the idea of what is generally called a two-state solution was the state's policy. One of those states was to be Palestine.
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> Name-calling works both ways. I suggest that we all at least agree to refrain from it, and also to take this subject off the TMMA list-serve, where it clearly does not belong.
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> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
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Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

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Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

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Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
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>
> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: Jonathan Margolis; Carol hillman; omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 8:10:24 PM

Hi all. Please remember that on May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence in accordance with the two-state solution enacted in Resolution 181 of the United Nations. Arab nations voted against Resolution and on May 15,1948, one day after Israel accepted the two-state solution, seven Arab nations attacked Israel and the nine-month War of Independence began. This is what happened. Yes, there are conflicting narratives.
Be well.
Bob Weintraub

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>
> Jonathan,
>
> I support a two state solution if the Palestinians would agree to it. How you can construe that I implied that I support expulsion of Palestinians, is beyond me. However, the slogan “Free Palestine “ suggests the expulsion of Jews from Israel.
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Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

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Perhaps no more on this platform please ? There is already too much anger in this world
Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership

chillman96@gmail.com
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617-513-9384

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> <image.png>
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> > Omar Mabrouk
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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	bobw9090@gmail.com
Cc:	lisafshatz@gmail.com; Jonathan Margolis; Carol hillman; omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date:	Friday, June 27, 2025 8:43:49 PM

Here's a perspective: if you voted as 80+percent did at Town a meeting, NOT even to hear a multi-ethnic Resolution asking for a cease fire, using the argument "such discussion does not belong at TM", pray tell why do you argue about the issue here?

If those who voted to table the issue continue perhaps ceases here, apologize for self-contradiction, and vote either never to speak on this forum again about anything to do with it, or abstain from opposing any such Resolution in the future.

Consistency may be the hobgoblin of small minds, but inconsistent is self serving and logical lapse.

Regina Frawley 16

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 8:10 PM, Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Hi all. Please remember that on May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence in accordance with the two-state solution enacted in Resolution 181 of the United Nations. Arab nations voted against Resolution and on May 15,1948, one day after Israel accepted the two-state solution, seven Arab nations attacked Israel and the nine-month War of Independence began.
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Brookline, MA 02446
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Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

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>
> I would also like to call your attention to the email below that

TMM Omar Mabrouk sent to me last year when I complained about graffiti with the same slogan.

Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!
>
> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To:	"TMMA"; Brookline PAXmembers
Cc:	sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; "John Bassett"; charlie.homer@gmail.com; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	[brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Friday, June 27, 2025 9:23:30 PM
Attachments:	hope, BFranklin] He that lives upon hope, dies faSting.pdf

---

[PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]

OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.

Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W** who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully) DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*" See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10 (*emphases* added)**:**

> "In terms of economic development each of the two governments has dedicated offices to promote new commercial activity. But there is *a major difference* in structure beyond this. The negotiating that leads to *getting to yes* has a more direct (and more explicitly political) path *in Newton* than in Brookline. … Newton's political process for "*getting to yes*" on its larger-scale projects is different than what we have in Brookline. *In terms of leadership the most significant difference is surely that Newton has a strong mayor system.* … Newton [h]as a *strong mayor/strong city council* system as the two branches of government are … *balanced in power* … . Mayor Fuller … has done well as *a consensus builder* and has mobilized strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly* … ."

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*"; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

-

THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT: Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$** will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors. And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still **HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaed") "residents" desires to maintain our neihborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all

Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office 617.738.6621 – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM Christopher Mutty via groups.io <muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I often hear that a benefit of becoming a city is the economic development that will follow from a streamlined government. Take a look at the Riverside station site in Newton which has been under development since 2009. See below for a column from the Charles River Chamber newsletter today.

Christopher Mutty
TMM P9

A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station



Scholars estimate that it took 26 years to build the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

In September, developer Robert Korff of Mark Development will return to the Newton City Council to seek approval for a project that's been in the works in various forms since 2009 and has been before the council multiple times since 2011.

The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

Then let the building, finally, begin.

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:47 AM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io <anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io <sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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He that lives upon hope will die fasting.

~ Benjamin Franklin

AZ QUOTES

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Regina Frawley
Cc: lisafshatz@gmail.com; Jonathan Margolis; Carol hillman; omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 11:17:49 PM

Hi Regina. We, and the political left/liberals/progressives nationally, are divided. There are thoughtful people on all sides.
I believe that education is the answer (surprise). Our community should support Adult Ed classes (assuming BACE hopefully survives) on the history of the Middle East. There should also be a course or courses at BHS. How about bringing back "Facing History and Ourselves" (born at the Runkle School) for all eighth graders?
Our goal: teach people how to think not what to think, grounded in knowledge.
Pay attention to the great Horace Mann, Massachusetts' first Secretary of Education, under whose leadership Brookline High was born. One of his core beliefs was the common school -- free for all children -- was the best way to bring diverse communities together.
Horace Mann was also a powerful abolitionist.
That is all.
Bob

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 8:43 PM, Regina Frawley <ginatmma@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> Here's a perspective: if you voted as 80+percent did at Town a meeting, NOT even to hear a multi-ethnic Resolution asking for a cease fire, using the argument "such discussion does not belong at TM", pray tell why do you argue about the issue here?
>
> If those who voted to table the issue continue perhaps ceases here, apologize for self-contradiction, and vote either never to speak on this forum again about anything to do with it, or abstain from opposing any such Resolution in the future.
>
> Consistency may be the hobgoblin of small minds, but inconsistent is self serving and logical lapse.
>
> Regina Frawley 16
>
> > On Jun 27, 2025, at 8:10 PM, Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Hi all. Please remember that on May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence in accordance with the two-state solution enacted in Resolution 181 of the United Nations. Arab nations voted against Resolution and on May 15,1948, one day after Israel accepted the

two-state solution, seven Arab nations attacked Israel and the nine-month War of Independence began.
This is what happened. Yes, there are conflicting narratives.
Be well.
Bob Weintraub

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 7:48 PM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Jonathan,
>
> I support a two state solution if the Palestinians would agree to it. How you can construe that I implied that I support expulsion of Palestinians, is beyond me. However, the slogan “Free Palestine “ suggests the expulsion of Jews from Israel.
>
> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11
>
> > On Jun 27, 2025, at 7:29 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:
> >
> > Lisa,
> >
> > Perhaps you have forgotten, but in 1947 the founders of the state of Israel agreed to partition of the land that the British had called Palestine. So, the founders of Israel agreed that there should be a Palestine (if one smaller than what the British colonial administration had described). And for the first 60 years of Israel's existence, the idea of what is generally called a two-state solution was the state's policy. One of those states was to be Palestine.
> >
> > If we want to discuss what is implied--but not stated--by words used, one might suggest that your latest post calls for the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza (a position, I

am sorry to say, espoused by too many Israelis). I trust you did not mean to say that.

Name-calling works both ways. I suggest that we all at least agree to refrain from it, and also to take this subject off the TMMA list-serve, where it clearly does not belong.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 27, 2025 at 06:34:42 PM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Carol:

"Free Palestine " implies that Jews are illegitimately occupying the land of Israel and denies that Israel is the ancestral homeland of the Jews. It is not a call for peaceful coexistence — two lands—Israel and Palestine— existing side by side—but a rallying cry for violence against Jews, which is evident from all the recent attacks against Jews by people screaming "Free Palestine" while physically harming and even murdering innocent Jews.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 5:28 PM, Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com> wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content

is safe.

Could we all please take a step back and reflect on the fact that concerns about Palestinians does not make one an anti semite. The phrase “ free Palestine “ is a political statement not an anti semitic statement
Perhaps no more on this platform please ? There is already too much anger in this world
Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 4:25 PM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs,
>
> Another instance of the antisemitic slogan “Free Palestine” was found in my neighborhood, on the corner of Thorndike and Winchester:
>
> <image.png>
>
> This same slogan was shouted by the murderer of a young Jewish couple in DC and by an Egyptian who torched elderly Jews in Boulder. It was also on a brick thrown through the window of the Butcherie last week, and was shouted by the criminal who last year stabbed a young Jewish man in Brooklyn.
>
> I would also like to call your attention to the email below that TMM Omar Mabrouk sent to me last year when I complained about graffiti with the same slogan.
>
> Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.
>
> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11
>
> > On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io

<omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io>
wrote:

How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 1:00:48 AM

At one time the counties paid for the courts, including judges' salaries. This made for some complicated accounting for Superior Court judges, who moved around a lot more than other judges. When a particular judge sat in Dedham, they were paid by Norfolk County, and when they sat in Cambridge, they were paid by Middlesex County.

I remember a case I had in Brookline District Court where a Norfolk County official was called to testify about the district court parking lot. At that timethe judge remarked that this county official was the court's landlord. But the state has gradually taken over a number of courthouses from the counties.

On 6/27/2025 10:55 AM, Charles Homer via groups.io wrote:

> My understanding is courts are entirely state run and funded, except that some (but not all) courthouses in some counties (including Norfolk Superior, but not Brookline District) are owned by the counties and leased to the state, so the state pays all costs. DAs, Sheriffs, and Registers of Deeds are elected by county, but that's only a geographic designation — it has nothing to do with funding or function — all funding comes from the state, and they are subject to oversight and regulation by state officials (AG for DAs, EOPS for sheriffs, Secretary of State for Registers of Deeds). The functions of Norfolk county relate to certain roads, a golf course (operated under concession), an agricultural school, owning and maintaining certain courthouses leased to the state and a couple of other buildings, and maybe a couple of other things, but not much. Abolishing county government, as has been done for most of the state, likely wouldn't save much for Brookline — I believe the amounts paid by municipalities to cover county government costs get factored into the local aid formula, to even out what the state pays for equivalent costs in most of the state that no longer has county government.
>
> Charlie Homer
> TMM Pct 8
>
> On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 10:38 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Thanks, Elizabeth!
> > I would be interested in attending. I bet most of us would benefit.
> > Lynda Roseman, P 14
> >
> > On Jun 27, 2025, at 10:34 AM, Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Perhaps it would be helpful for Town Meeting Members, if I gave a brief primer on County government/budgeting/services to the TMMA?

Great idea, Elizabeth. Yes, please. Joslin Murphy (P16)

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 9:57 AM Elizabeth Childs via groups.io <elizabethchilds=me.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear Joe,
>
> You are absolutely correct about this issue with Norfolk County. Our contribution to the County's budget is set by the state and unless the County is dissolved, any change that Brookline could make independently is extremely difficult and unrealistic. Yes, we as a community contribute the largest share to the County because of Brooklines land values.
>
> I am the representative from Brookline to the Norfolk County Advisory Board for the past 8 years and as of July 1 will end my 2 year term as Chair of the Norfolk County Advisory Board (NCAB). I have served as Vice Chair, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Clerk, but my primary work at the County was to push for and serve on an operational audit and financial restructuring which moved the County from a structural deficit to a balanced budget and created a rainy day fund and a capital investment fund. It is my privilege to represent Brookline on this Board and proud of my work to make the County more fiscally efficient and responsible with municipal contributions.
>
> Brookline does contribute more than it receives from County government, but I can assure you that when Brookline needs something from the County, I strongly advocate for and expect that the County will respond, which they do. One example of this is Brookline's large ARPA portion which was administered by the County. The rules for these funds were significantly more restrictive than the direct municipal ARPA funds, and Brookline needed considerable help from the County to receive its full share, which it did, after a considerable amount of pushing from yours truly.
>
> Brookline could take more advantage of County services. The County supports veterans, operates the public President's golf course in Quincy, which also has tennis courts, summer camp, and a lovely clubhouse, manages and oversees the Norfolk Agricultural High School, where Brookline students could attend at significantly lower cost than what we spend per student in Brookline, provides surveying services which Brookline uses, has a weights and measures program that communities can access, and maintains the Brookline Court, in addition to all the County

based operations that Joe delineates below. Our neighboring communities receive great value from the County. Brookline could receive more. We have no students at Norfolk Agricultural High School and have not for many years.

Perhaps it would be helpful for Town Meeting Members, if I gave a brief primer on County government/budgeting/services to the TMMA? I could invite our excellent County Director, John Cronin, and one of the County Commissioners to join me in explaining what the County is and does. We may not believe that Norfolk County is necessary, but unless or until it is dissolved, I would encourage Brookline to get the most that it can from Norfolk County regional services, and it is in our best interest for the County to operate efficiently and soundly.

Please feel free to call me if anyone has any questions about Norfolk County. My cell phone is 617-851-8704.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Childs
TMM-04

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 12:52 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> It's more complicated than that. Not only does the state pay the costs of Middlesex and most of the other counties in the state, but the County Commissioners in those counties have been abolished. The only counties that still have existing county governments are in the Southeast part of the state: Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable, Nantucket, and Dukes. Of those, Barnstable functions as a regional government for the Cape, and Dukes does the same for Martha's Vineyard and the Elisabeth Islands. Nantucket County consists only of the Town of Nantucket, and the Select Board of the Town are the County Commissioners.
>
> It might make sense to have the state take over Norfolk County government as has been done with most other counties. But for Brookline to secede from the county leaves a lot of questions. Which District Attorney will be responsible for prosecuting criminal cases in Brookline? Which county's jails will convicted criminals go to? The Brookline District Court could easily enough be transferred to another county, but beyond the district court level, which county's Superior Court and Probate Court will cover Brookline? Which county's Registry of

Deeds will hold Brookline real estate records? Which county's deputy sheriffs will serve civil process in Brookline?

On 6/26/2025 2:57 PM, Lee Selwyn wrote:

> Regina,
>
> If I recall correctly, the issue of the Brookline District Court was raised the last time that TM addressed the matter of exiting Norfolk County. My recollection is that it was pointed out the location of the court in Brookline is a State matter, not a county matter, so exiting Norfolk County would not have any effect on that Same for the Registry of Deeds.
>
> It was also pointed out that the costs of several other counties, including (if I recall) Middlesex, are paid directly by the state, not by the cities and towns. So pushing the legislature to revise the funding mechanism nor Norfolk is yet another strategy to consider.
>
> Lee
>
> Lee L. Selwyn
> Economics and Technology, Inc.
> 100 Franklin Street, Suite 602
> Boston, Massachusetts 02110
>
> +1-617-598-2222
>
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On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 2:40 PM Regina Frawley <ginatmma@gmail.com> wrote:

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> Lee L. Selwyn
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A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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"I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal."
– *Groucho Marx*

--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: Harry Friedman; Lynda Roseman; rcvben@earthlink.net
Cc: Joslin Murphy; elizabethchilds@me.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 1:02:12 AM

BTW, weren't we supposed to have a TMMA Annual Meeting around now? I don't think I ever got a notice of one.

On 6/27/2025 12:01 PM, Harry Friedman wrote:

> This is a great idea, and speaking for the TMMA, we will arrange with Elizabeth to present this programme.
>
> Harry Friedman
> TMMA Corresponding Secretary
> TMM Precinct 12
>
> On Friday, June 27, 2025 at 11:25:30 AM EDT, The Benkas via groups.io <rcvben=earthlink.net@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I agree with Lynda and Joslin.
>
> Carla Benka
> TMM, Pct. 14
>
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Please feel free to call me if anyone has any questions about Norfolk County. My cell phone is 617-851-8704.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Childs
TMM-04

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> Lee L. Selwyn
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A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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– *Groucho Marx*

--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16


Virus-free.www.avast.com

--
A. Joseph Ross
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Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To:	Pam Roberts; elizabethchilds@me.com
Cc:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date:	Saturday, June 28, 2025 1:04:10 AM

Back whenever it was that Town Meeting was asked to vote on getting out of Norfolk County, we heard from a student at Norfolk Aggie, who told Town Meeting about her school and urged against withdrawing from Norfolk County.

On 6/27/2025 12:29 PM, Pam Roberts wrote:

> "We have no students at Norfolk Agricultural High School and have not for many years. "
>
> Respectfully, this is not true. My daughter, who will be a senior at university this fall, graduated from Norfolk Aggie in 2022. She had a glorious experience. Norfolk Aggie is much more of a holistic place, in which the student do a lot of hands-on stuff, as well as all of the math, sciences, and English language arts. She is a Wildlife Management major, and is very excited about her future. Her acceptance there was possible because of our being part of Norfolk County. And I do believe there was a senior at the school when she was a freshman, and a freshman when she was a senior.
>
> I honestly think more kids from Brookline should explore it as an alternative to Brookline High School. That was a terrific place for my two sons, but simply isn't for everyone.
>
> Pam Roberts
> TMM precinct 2

> > On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:57 AM, Elizabeth Childs via groups.io <elizabethchilds=me.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
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A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 1:09:06 AM

Yes, unfortunately the Arab movement against Israel now insists that there never was a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and that Jesus was a Palestinian. As they use the slogan, "Free Palestine" means getting rid of Israel. Freeing "Palestine" could mean getting rid of Hamas, the PLO, and the various groups that are the real oppressors of Palestinian Arabs.

On 6/27/2025 6:34 PM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io wrote:

> Carol:
>
> "Free Palestine " implies that Jews are illegitimately occupying the land of Israel and denies that Israel is the ancestral homeland of the Jews. It is not a call for peaceful coexistence — two lands—Israel and Palestine— existing side by side— but a rallying cry for violence against Jews, which is evident from all the recent attacks against Jews by people screaming "Free Palestine" while physically harming and even murdering innocent Jews.
>
> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11
>
> > On Jun 27, 2025, at 5:28 PM, Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com> wrote:
> >
> > CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
> >
> > Could we all please take a step back and reflect on the fact that concerns about Palestinians does not make one an anti semite. The phrase " free Palestine " is a political statement not an anti semitic statement
> > Perhaps no more on this platform please ? There is already too much anger in this world
> > Carol Hillman
> > TMM pct 1
> >
> > Carol Hillman
> > The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
> > chillman96@gmail.com
> > 287 Kent St., Apt. 2
> > Brookline, MA 02446
> > 617-513-9384

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 4:25 PM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs,
>
> Another instance of the antisemitic slogan “Free Palestine” was found in my neighborhood, on the corner of Thorndike and Winchester:
>
> <image.png>
>
> This same slogan was shouted by the murderer of a young Jewish couple in DC and by an Egyptian who torched elderly Jews in Boulder. It was also on a brick thrown through the window of the Butcherie last week, and was shouted by the criminal who last year stabbed a young Jewish man in Brooklyn.
>
> I would also like to call your attention to the email below that TMM Omar Mabrouk sent to me last year when I complained about graffiti with the same slogan.
>
> Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.
>
> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11
>
> > On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!
> >
> > Omar Mabrouk

TMMp5

--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John P. Hebert via groups.io <John=Hebertcomms.com@groups.io>
To: Lee Selwyn; Elizabeth Childs; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 12:29:49 AM

Elizabeth, thank you. I too would be interested in attending.

Also, in answer to Lee's question in this thread of how much was spent prosecuting the Karen Read case, twice, a "deeper dive" with AI on Google offers this summary:

> "..the combined costs known so far exceed $800,000, and this number is incomplete as it excludes various expenses like salaries, overtime, and potentially confidential investigative costs."

John Hebert, P7

On 6/27/2025 11:25 AM, The Benkas via groups.io wrote:

> I agree with Lynda and Joslin.
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> Carla Benka
> TMM, Pct. 14
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TMM-04

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Member, Advisory Committee

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TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io>
To: Elizabeth Childs
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 12:54:00 AM

One thing I'm not clear about. Does the county or the state pay for the DA's office?

On 6/27/2025 9:57 AM, Elizabeth Childs wrote:

> Dear Joe,
>
> You are absolutely correct about this issue with Norfolk County. Our contribution to the County's budget is set by the state and unless the County is dissolved, any change that Brookline could make independently is extremely difficult and unrealistic. Yes, we as a community contribute the largest share to the County because of Brooklines land values.
>
> I am the representative from Brookline to the Norfolk County Advisory Board for the past 8 years and as of July 1 will end my 2 year term as Chair of the Norfolk County Advisory Board (NCAB). I have served as Vice Chair, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Clerk, but my primary work at the County was to push for and serve on an operational audit and financial restructuring which moved the County from a structural deficit to a balanced budget and created a rainy day fund and a capital investment fund. It is my privilege to represent Brookline on this Board and proud of my work to make the County more fiscally efficient and responsible with municipal contributions.
>
> Brookline does contribute more than it receives from County government, but I can assure you that when Brookline needs something from the County, I strongly advocate for and expect that the County will respond, which they do. One example of this is Brookline's large ARPA portion which was administered by the County. The rules for these funds were significantly more restrictive than the direct municipal ARPA funds, and Brookline needed considerable help from the County to receive its full share, which it did, after a considerable amount of pushing from yours truly.
>
> Brookline could take more advantage of County services. The County supports veterans, operates the public President's golf course in Quincy, which also has tennis courts, summer camp, and a lovely clubhouse, manages and oversees the Norfolk Agricultural High School, where Brookline students could attend at significantly lower cost than what we spend per student in Brookline, provides surveying services which Brookline uses, has a weights and measures program that communities can access, and maintains the Brookline Court, in addition to all the County based operations that Joe delineates below. Our neighboring communities receive great value from the County. Brookline could receive more. We have no students at Norfolk Agricultural High School and have not for many years.
>
> Perhaps it would be helpful for Town Meeting Members, if I gave a brief primer on County government/budgeting/services to the TMMA? I could invite our

excellent County Director, John Cronin, and one of the County Commissioners to join me in explaining what the County is and does. We may not believe that Norfolk County is necessary, but unless or until it is dissolved, I would encourage Brookline to get the most that it can from Norfolk County regional services, and it is in our best interest for the County to operate efficiently and soundly.

Please feel free to call me if anyone has any questions about Norfolk County. My cell phone is 617-851-8704.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Childs
TMM-04

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 12:52 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> It's more complicated than that. Not only does the state pay the costs of Middlesex and most of the other counties in the state, but the County Commissioners in those counties have been abolished. The only counties that still have existing county governments are in the Southeast part of the state: Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable, Nantucket, and Dukes. Of those, Barnstable functions as a regional government for the Cape, and Dukes does the same for Martha's Vineyard and the Elisabeth Islands. Nantucket County consists only of the Town of Nantucket, and the Select Board of the Town are the County Commissioners.
>
> It might make sense to have the state take over Norfolk County government as has been done with most other counties. But for Brookline to secede from the county leaves a lot of questions. Which District Attorney will be responsible for prosecuting criminal cases in Brookline? Which county's jails will convicted criminals go to? The Brookline District Court could easily enough be transferred to another county, but beyond the district court level, which county's Superior Court and Probate Court will cover Brookline? Which county's Registry of Deeds will hold Brookline real estate records? Which county's deputy sheriffs will serve civil process in Brookline?
>
> On 6/26/2025 2:57 PM, Lee Selwyn wrote:
>
> > Regina,
> >
> > If I recall correctly, the issue of the Brookline District Court was raised the last time that TM addressed the matter of exiting Norfolk County. My recollection is that it was pointed out the location of the court in Brookline is a State matter, not a county matter, so exiting Norfolk County would not have any effect on that Same for the Registry of Deeds.

It was also pointed out that the costs of several other counties, including (if I recall) Middlesex, are paid directly by the state, not by the cities and towns. So pushing the legislature to revise the funding mechanism nor Norfolk is yet another strategy to consider.

Lee

Lee L. Selwyn
Economics and Technology, Inc.
100 Franklin Street, Suite 602
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

+1-617-598-2222

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On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 2:40 PM Regina Frawley <ginatmma@gmail.com> wrote:

> Hi Lee,
>
> Not sure whether Town Meeting would vote to remove ourselves from Norfolk County. The "lawyers" and above all, Brookline Polic Dept. will oppose, as the courthouse is so convenient for their use. (They don't want to have to go to Dedham, a sthey've testified in the past."
>
> Despite the fact we'll save millions annually. (even factoring in the "time loss" for police witnesses). The formula is based on land value/sales, and Brookline pays by far the highest "fee" to the COuntry.
>
> The other means of addressing this is the Political WIll of the Select Board, which has been silent over the two times Town Meeting has voted on the issue of removing ourselves. They should be focusing on CHANGING THE FEE FORMULA. At least THAT should be done, but so far , nada. I have no idea what our "representative " from the town to the COuntry Commissioners actually does, or has done, since

nothing has changed, and nothing is reported to TM. Most people hae no idea who that is, yet he/she is appointed by the Select Board.

It seems no one wants the work it wouold take to petition the COuntry COmmissioners, or change the formula at whatever level of government is needed. (Perhaps at State level?)

THank you Lee, as our reliable fiscal watchdog and voice of reason on the Advisory Commtitee.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 11:49 AM Lee Selwyn via groups.io <lselwyn=econtech.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Does anyone know --- or have an estimate of -- the cost that Norfolk DA Morrissey spent on the unsuccessful litigation of the second Karen Reed trial, and how much of that cost was or will be paid by Brookline as the largest municipality in Norfolk County?
>
> Whatever it was, it has to be a record amount for getting a guilty verdict on an OUI charge.
>
> If Brookline did or will end up paying some portion of those costs, that is yet another reason why we need to try once again to extricate ourselves from Norfolk County.
>
> Lee L. Selwyn
> Member, Advisory Committee
>
> +1-617-510-6033
>
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--
A. Joseph Ross
TMM Pct 16

Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

===
“I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
– *Groucho Marx*

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Regina Frawley via groups.io <ginatmma=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: joe@attorneyross.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 7:12:57 AM

Excellent, Bob. Just not here on TMMA
(Unless there is another WA course).

Learning how to think includes logic. One cannot vote to deny petitioners their Right to Petition Their Government arguing the topic is inappropriate for that TM body, THEN beat it to death on a restricted TM listserv. Simple logic

Find another venue. And yes an adult Ed venue would be ideal, as people willing to hear all/other views . Since I voted to hear the Resolution I'm obviously open. But those who voted against even simply "hearing " the WA, should be consistent. If it were "inappropriate" at TM, it's "inappropriate "on the TM listserv , most especially by those who voted not to hear.

Have a Fletcher degree, learned much about Israel, Palestine, the general region, etc. I could teach a course on the matter. Just not here.

If you can't fund Adult Education then hold a forum for the general population. Oh wait!!! That could have been Town Meeting!!

Regards

Regina Frawley

> On Jun 28, 2025, at 1:09 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Yes, unfortunately the Arab movement against Israel now insists that there never was a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and that Jesus was a Palestinian. As WA)!
>
> they use the slogan, "Free Palestine" means getting rid of Israel. Freeing "Palestine" could mean getting rid of Hamas, the PLO, and the various groups that are the real oppressors of Palestinian Arabs.
>
> On 6/27/2025 6:34 PM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io wrote:
>
> Carol:

“Free Palestine “ implies that Jews are illegitimately occupying the land of Israel and denies that Israel is the ancestral homeland of the Jews. It is not a call for peaceful coexistence — two lands—Israel and Palestine— existing side by side—but a rallying cry for violence against Jews, which is evident from all the recent attacks against Jews by people screaming “Free Palestine” while physically harming and even murdering innocent Jews.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

On Jun 27, 2025, at 5:28 PM, Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com> wrote:

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Could we all please take a step back and reflect on the fact that concerns about Palestinians does not make one an anti semite. The phrase “ free Palestine “ is a political statement not an anti semitic statement
Perhaps no more on this platform please ? There is already too much anger in this world
Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 4:25 PM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs,
>
> Another instance of the antisemitic slogan “Free Palestine” was found in my neighborhood, on the corner of Thorndike and Winchester:
>
> <image.png>

This same slogan was shouted by the murderer of a young Jewish couple in DC and by an Egyptian who torched elderly Jews in Boulder. It was also on a brick thrown through the window of the Butcherie last week, and was shouted by the criminal who last year stabbed a young Jewish man in Brooklyn.

I would also like to call your attention to the email below that TMM Omar Mabrouk sent to me last year when I complained about graffiti with the same slogan.

Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM,
> OmarM_P5 via groups.io
> <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io>
> wrote:
>
> How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!
>
> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

--
A. Joseph Ross

TMM Pct 16
Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: Regina Frawley; bobw9090@gmail.com
Cc: lisafshatz@gmail.com; Jonathan Margolis; Carol hillman; omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 8:02:40 AM

I actually like the discussion of Israel on this list. I know and respect the people who contribute. And I agree that Facing History and Ourselves should return. It helped shape our kids.
John Bassett
p6

On Friday, June 27, 2025 at 11:17:49 PM EDT, Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Hi Regina. We, and the political left/liberals/progressives nationally, are divided. There are thoughtful people on all sides.
> I believe that education is the answer (surprise). Our community should support Adult Ed classes (assuming BACE hopefully survives) on the history of the Middle East. There should also be a course or courses at BHS. How about bringing back "Facing History and Ourselves" (born at the Runkle School) for all eighth graders?
> Our goal: teach people how to think not what to think, grounded in knowledge.
> Pay attention to the great Horace Mann, Massachusetts' first Secretary of Education, under whose leadership Brookline High was born. One of his core beliefs was the common school -- free for all children -- was the best way to bring diverse communities together.
> Horace Mann was also a powerful abolitionist.
> That is all.
> Bob
>
> > On Jun 27, 2025, at 8:43 PM, Regina Frawley <ginatmma@gmail.com> wrote:
> >
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> >
> > If those who voted to table the issue continue perhaps ceases here, apologize for self-contradiction, and vote either never to speak on this forum again about anything to do with it, or abstain from opposing any such Resolution in the future.
> >
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Hi all. Please remember that on May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence in accordance with the two-state solution enacted in Resolution 181 of the United Nations. Arab nations voted against Resolution and on May 15,1948, one day after Israel accepted the two-state solution, seven Arab nations attacked Israel and the nine-month War of Independence began.
This is what happened. Yes, there are conflicting narratives.
Be well.
Bob Weintraub

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>
> Jonathan,
>
> I support a two state solution if the Palestinians would agree to it. How you can construe that I implied that I support expulsion of Palestinians, is beyond me. However, the slogan “Free Palestine “ suggests the expulsion of Jews from Israel.
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> >
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> >
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> >
> > If we want to discuss what is implied--but not stated--by words used, one might suggest that your latest post calls for the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza (a position, I am sorry to say, espoused by too many Israelis). I trust you did not mean to say that.
> >
> > Name-calling works both ways. I suggest that we all at least agree to refrain from it, and also to take this subject off the TMMA list-serve, where it clearly does not belong.
> >
> > Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> > Brookline, MA 02446

(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 27, 2025 at 06:34:42 PM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Carol:

“Free Palestine “ implies that Jews are illegitimately occupying the land of Israel and denies that Israel is the ancestral homeland of the Jews. It is not a call for peaceful coexistence — two lands—Israel and Palestine— existing side by side—but a rallying cry for violence against Jews, which is evident from all the recent attacks against Jews by people screaming “Free Palestine” while physically harming and even murdering innocent Jews.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

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Carol Hillman
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<image.png>

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Regina Frawley; bobw9090@gmail.com; baswolfe@aol.com
Cc: lisafshatz@gmail.com; Carol hillman; omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 8:45:11 AM

The question is not whether we like a particular topic. I like to discuss wooden boats (indeed, I went to Mystic, Connecticut yesterday for the annual WoodenBoat Show). But that would not be appropriate for this list. Nor are discussions of alleged anti-Semitism appropriate. Or national politics. Or the Red Sox.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
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Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 8:49:25 AM

We teach children they can't have their cake and eat it too. This "discussion " is being cooked and served by those who refused the meal at TM, which only was asked to discuss a Cease Fire, NOT the merits of Israel Vs Palestine. The proper "discussion" thus is the Tabling of the discussion at TM. Stay on track and focused.

Hypocrisy is unpalatable even in pill form. Too tough to swallow.

Regina

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> p6
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> Hi Regina. We, and the political left/liberals/progressives nationally, are divided. There are thoughtful people on all sides.
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> Our goal: teach people how to think not what to think, grounded in knowledge.
> Pay attention to the great Horace Mann, Massachusetts' first Secretary of Education, under whose leadership Brookline High was born. One of his core beliefs was the common school -- free for all children -- was the best way to bring diverse communities together.
> Horace Mann was also a powerful abolitionist.
> That is all.
> Bob
>
> > On Jun 27, 2025, at 8:43 PM, Regina Frawley <ginatmma@gmail.com> wrote:

Here's a perspective: if you voted as 80+percent did at Town a meeting, NOT even to hear a multi-ethnic Resolution asking for a cease fire, using the argument "such discussion does not belong at TM", pray tell why do you argue about the issue here?

If those who voted to table the issue continue perhaps ceases here, apologize for self-contradiction, and vote either never to speak on this forum again about anything to do with it, or abstain from opposing any such Resolution in the future.

Consistency may be the hobgoblin of small minds, but inconsistent is self serving and logical lapse.

Regina Frawley 16

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 8:10 PM, Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi all. Please remember that on May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence in accordance with the two-state solution enacted in Resolution 181 of the United Nations. Arab nations voted against Resolution and on May 15,1948, one day after Israel accepted the two-state solution, seven Arab nations attacked Israel and the nine-month War of Independence began.
This is what happened. Yes, there are conflicting narratives.
Be well.
Bob Weintraub

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 7:48 PM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Jonathan,

I support a two state solution if the Palestinians would agree to it. How you can construe that I implied that I support expulsion of Palestinians, is beyond me. However, the slogan "Free Palestine " suggests the expulsion of Jews from Israel.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 7:29 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

Lisa,

Perhaps you have forgotten, but in 1947 the founders of the state of Israel agreed to partition of the land that the British had called Palestine. So, the founders of Israel agreed that there should be a Palestine (if one smaller than what the British colonial administration had described). And for the first 60 years of Israel's existence, the idea of what is generally called a two-state solution was the state's policy. One of those states was to be Palestine.

If we want to discuss what is implied--but not stated--by words used, one might suggest that your latest post calls for the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza (a position, I am sorry to say, espoused by too many Israelis). I trust you did not mean to say that.

Name-calling works both ways. I suggest that we all at least agree to refrain from it, and also to take this subject off the TMMA list-serve, where it clearly does not belong.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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Carol:

“Free Palestine “ implies that Jews are illegitimately occupying the land of Israel and denies that Israel is the ancestral homeland of the Jews. It is not a call for peaceful coexistence — two lands—Israel and Palestine—existing side by side—but a rallying cry for violence against Jews, which is evident from all the recent attacks against Jews by people screaming “Free Palestine” while physically harming and even murdering innocent Jews.

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> On Jun 27, 2025, at 5:28 PM, Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com> wrote:

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Could we all please take a step back and reflect on the fact that concerns about Palestinians does not make one an anti semite. The phrase " free Palestine " is a political statement not an anti semitic statement
Perhaps no more on this platform please ? There is already too much anger in this world
Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 4:25 PM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs,
>
> Another instance of the antisemitic slogan "Free Palestine" was found in my neighborhood, on the corner of Thorndike and Winchester:
>
> <image.png>
>
> This same slogan was shouted by the murderer of a young Jewish couple in DC and by an Egyptian who torched elderly Jews in Boulder. It was also on a brick thrown through the window of the Butcherie last week, and was shouted by the criminal who last year stabbed a young Jewish man in Brooklyn.
>
> I would also like to call your attention to the email below that TMM Omar Mabrouk sent to me last year when I complained about graffiti with the same slogan.
>
> Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.
>
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> > On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
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> > How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians

> live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!
>
> Omar Mabrouk
> TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: John@hebertcomms.com
Cc: Lee Selwyn; Elizabeth Childs; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Brookline"s share of the cost of the second Karen Reed trial
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 8:57:24 AM

The state ethics law prohibits state and municipal employees from using taxpayer funds to "pursue a vendetta" against an individual or group of individuals. Without knowing all of the facts, it appeared to me - as a former prosecutor - that Read was overcharged. Joslin Murphy (P16)

On Sat, Jun 28, 2025 at 12:29 AM John P. Hebert via groups.io <John=Hebertcomms.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Elizabeth, thank you. I too would be interested in attending.
>
> Also, in answer to Lee's question in this thread of how much was spent prosecuting the Karen Read case, twice, a "deeper dive" with AI on Google offers this summary:
>
> > "..the combined costs known so far exceed $800,000, and this number is incomplete as it excludes various expenses like salaries, overtime, and potentially confidential investigative costs."
>
> John Hebert, P7
>
> On 6/27/2025 11:25 AM, The Benkas via groups.io wrote:
>
> > I agree with Lynda and Joslin.
> >
> > Carla Benka
> > TMM, Pct. 14
> >
> > > On Jun 27, 2025, at 10:38 AM, Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Thanks, Elizabeth!
> > > I would be interested in attending. I bet most of us would benefit.
> > > Lynda Roseman, P 14
> > >
> > > > On Jun 27, 2025, at 10:34 AM, Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > > >
> > > > *Perhaps it would be helpful for Town Meeting Members, if I gave a brief primer on County government/budgeting/services to the TMMA?*

Great idea, Elizabeth. Yes, please. Joslin Murphy (P16)

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 9:57 AM Elizabeth Childs via groups.io <elizabethchilds=me.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear Joe,
>
> You are absolutely correct about this issue with Norfolk County. Our contribution to the County's budget is set by the state and unless the County is dissolved, any change that Brookline could make independently is extremely difficult and unrealistic. Yes, we as a community contribute the largest share to the County because of Brooklines land values.
>
> I am the representative from Brookline to the Norfolk County Advisory Board for the past 8 years and as of July 1 will end my 2 year term as Chair of the Norfolk County Advisory Board (NCAB). I have served as Vice Chair, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Clerk, but my primary work at the County was to push for and serve on an operational audit and financial restructuring which moved the County from a structural deficit to a balanced budget and created a rainy day fund and a capital investment fund. It is my privilege to represent Brookline on this Board and proud of my work to make the County more fiscally efficient and responsible with municipal contributions.
>
> Brookline does contribute more than it receives from County government, but I can assure you that when Brookline needs something from the County, I strongly advocate for and expect that the County will respond, which they do. One example of this is Brookline's large ARPA portion which was administered by the County. The rules for these funds were significantly more restrictive than the direct municipal ARPA funds, and Brookline needed considerable help from the County to receive its full share, which it did, after a considerable amount of pushing from yours truly.
>
> Brookline could take more advantage of County services. The County supports veterans, operates the public President's golf course in Quincy, which also has tennis courts, summer camp, and a lovely clubhouse, manages and oversees the Norfolk

Agricultural High School, where Brookline students could attend at significantly lower cost than what we spend per student in Brookline, provides surveying services which Brookline uses, has a weights and measures program that communities can access, and maintains the Brookline Court, in addition to all the County based operations that Joe delineates below. Our neighboring communities receive great value from the County. Brookline could receive more. We have no students at Norfolk Agricultural High School and have not for many years.

Perhaps it would be helpful for Town Meeting Members, if I gave a brief primer on County government/budgeting/services to the TMMA? I could invite our excellent County Director, John Cronin, and one of the County Commissioners to join me in explaining what the County is and does. We may not believe that Norfolk County is necessary, but unless or until it is dissolved, I would encourage Brookline to get the most that it can from Norfolk County regional services, and it is in our best interest for the County to operate efficiently and soundly.

Please feel free to call me if anyone has any questions about Norfolk County. My cell phone is 617-851-8704.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Childs
TMM-04

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 12:52 AM, Joe Ross via groups.io <joe=attorneyross.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> It's more complicated than that. Not only does the state pay the costs of Middlesex and most of the other counties in the state, but the County Commissioners in those counties have been abolished. The only counties that still have existing county governments are in the Southeast part of the state: Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable, Nantucket, and Dukes. Of those, Barnstable functions as a regional government for the Cape, and Dukes does the same for Martha's

Vineyard and the Elisabeth Islands. Nantucket County consists only of the Town of Nantucket, and the Select Board of the Town are the County Commissioners.

It might make sense to have the state take over Norfolk County government as has been done with most other counties. But for Brookline to secede from the county leaves a lot of questions. Which District Attorney will be responsible for prosecuting criminal cases in Brookline? Which county's jails will convicted criminals go to? The Brookline District Court could easily enough be transferred to another county, but beyond the district court level, which county's Superior Court and Probate Court will cover Brookline? Which county's Registry of Deeds will hold Brookline real estate records? Which county's deputy sheriffs will serve civil process in Brookline?

On 6/26/2025 2:57 PM, Lee Selwyn wrote:

> Regina,
>
> If I recall correctly, the issue of the Brookline District Court was raised the last time that TM addressed the matter of exiting Norfolk County. My recollection is that it was pointed out the location of the court in Brookline is a State matter, not a county matter, so exiting Norfolk County would not have any effect on that Same for the Registry of Deeds.
>
> It was also pointed out that the costs of several other counties, including (if I recall) Middlesex, are paid directly by the state, not by

the cities and towns. So pushing the legislature to revise the funding mechanism nor Norfolk is yet another strategy to consider.

Lee

Lee L. Selwyn
Economics and Technology, Inc.
100 Franklin Street, Suite 602
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

+1-617-598-2222

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On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 2:40 PM Regina Frawley <ginatmma@gmail.com> wrote:

> Hi Lee,
>
> Not sure whether Town Meeting would vote to remove ourselves from Norfolk County. The

"lawyers" and above all, Brookline Polic Dept. will oppose, as the courthouse is so convenient for their use. (They don't want to have to go to Dedham, a sthey've testified in the past."

Despite the fact we'll save millions annually. (even factoring in the "time loss" for police witnesses). The formula is based on land value/sales, and Brookline pays by far the highest "fee" to the COuntry.

The other means of addressing this is the Political WIll of the Select Board, which has been silent over the two times Town Meeting has voted on the issue of removing ourselves. They should be focusing on CHANGING THE FEE FORMULA. At least THAT should be done, but so far , nada. I have no idea what our "representative " from the town to the COuntry Commissioners actually does, or has done, since nothing has changed, and nothing is reported to TM. Most people hae no idea who that is, yet he/she is appointed by the Select Board.

It seems no one wants the work it wouold take to petition the COuntry COmmissioners, or change the formula at whatever level of

government is needed.
(Perhaps at State level?)

THank you Lee, as our reliable fiscal watchdog and voice of reason on the Advisory Commtitee.

Regina Frawley 16

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 11:49 AM Lee Selwyn via groups.io <lselwyn=econtech.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Does anyone know --- or have an estimate of -- the cost that Norfolk DA Morrissey spent on the unsuccessful litigation of the second Karen Reed trial, and how much of that cost was or will be paid by Brookline as the largest municipality in Norfolk County?
>
> Whatever it was, it has to be a record amount for getting a guilty verdict on an OUI charge.
>
> If Brookline did or will end up paying some portion of those costs, that is yet another reason why we need to try once again to extricate ourselves from Norfolk County.
>
> Lee L. Selwyn
> Member, Advisory Committee
>
> +1-617-510-6033
>
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> > --
> > A. Joseph Ross
> > TMM Pct 16
> > Chestnut Hill, Brookline, MA
> >
> > ===
> > “I’m not crazy about reality, but it’s still the only place to get a decent meal.”
> > – *Groucho Marx*

> --
> Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

--
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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	John Bassett; Regina Frawley
Cc:	bobw9090@gmail.com; lisafshatz@gmail.com; Carol hillman; omarmabrouk@hotmail.com; brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date:	Saturday, June 28, 2025 8:57:30 AM

While I suppose it is not entirely outside the purview of this list-serve, I suggest that it is not a good idea to use it to re-visit the actions of Town Meeting, in the absence of some new warrant article.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

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Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

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Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.

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To:	Jonathan Margolis
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Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date:	Saturday, June 28, 2025 9:08:30 AM

Disagree on that Jon. The use of Tabling is a procedural issue and very appropriate and important to TM procedure.

The TMMA should discuss this at a full meeting. Indeed, it should prioritize a Sense" of the membership and appropriate use.

And maybe we can find a list of topics/ times to use Tabling: like when Nuclear weapons ones up by kids fattening resumes for college applications. But then, we don't want to discourage them or hurt feelings do we. Even when they haven't true understanding of an issue. And we know that's what many whisper.

R

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> > > On Jun 27, 2025, at 8:43 PM, Regina Frawley <ginatmma@gmail.com> wrote:
> > >
> > > Here's a perspective: if you voted as 80+percent did at Town a meeting, NOT even to hear a multi-ethnic Resolution asking for a cease fire, using the argument "such discussion does not belong at TM", pray tell why do you argue about the issue here?
> > >
> > > If those who voted to table the issue continue perhaps ceases here, apologize for self-contradiction, and vote either never to speak on this forum again about anything to do with it, or abstain from opposing any such Resolution in the future.

Consistency may be the hobgoblin of small minds, but inconsistent is self serving and logical lapse.

Regina Frawley 16

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 8:10 PM, Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Hi all. Please remember that on May 14, 1948, Israel declared its independence in accordance with the two-state solution enacted in Resolution 181 of the United Nations. Arab nations voted against Resolution and on May 15,1948, one day after Israel accepted the two-state solution, seven Arab nations attacked Israel and the nine-month War of Independence began.
This is what happened. Yes, there are conflicting narratives.
Be well.
Bob Weintraub

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 7:48 PM, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Jonathan,

I support a two state solution if the Palestinians would agree to it. How you can construe that I implied that I support expulsion of Palestinians, is beyond me. However, the slogan “Free Palestine “ suggests the expulsion of Jews from Israel.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 7:29 PM, Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Lisa,
>
> Perhaps you have forgotten, but in 1947 the founders of the state of Israel agreed to partition of the land that the British had called Palestine. So, the founders of Israel agreed that there should be a Palestine (if one smaller than what the British colonial administration had

described). And for the first 60 years of Israel's existence, the idea of what is generally called a two-state solution was the state's policy. One of those states was to be Palestine.

If we want to discuss what is implied--but not stated--by words used, one might suggest that your latest post calls for the expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza (a position, I am sorry to say, espoused by too many Israelis). I trust you did not mean to say that.

Name-calling works both ways. I suggest that we all at least agree to refrain from it, and also to take this subject off the TMMA list-serve, where it clearly does not belong.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Friday, June 27, 2025 at 06:34:42 PM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Carol:

“Free Palestine “ implies that Jews are illegitimately occupying the land of Israel and denies that Israel is the ancestral homeland of the Jews. It is not a call for peaceful coexistence — two lands—Israel and Palestine— existing side by side—but a rallying cry for violence against Jews, which is evident from all the recent attacks against Jews by people screaming “Free Palestine” while physically harming and even murdering innocent Jews.

Lisa Shatz TMM p 11

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 5:28 PM, Carol hillman <chillman96@gmail.com> wrote:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the University. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Could we all please take a step back and reflect on the fact that concerns about Palestinians does not make one an anti semite. The phrase " free Palestine " is a political statement not an anti semitic statement
Perhaps no more on this platform please ? There is already too much anger in this world
Carol Hillman
TMM pct 1

Carol Hillman
The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership
chillman96@gmail.com
287 Kent St., Apt. 2
Brookline, MA 02446
617-513-9384

On Fri, Jun 27, 2025 at 4:25 PM Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs,
>
> Another instance of the antisemitic slogan "Free Palestine" was found in my neighborhood, on the corner of Thorndike and Winchester:
>
> <image.png>
>
> This same slogan was shouted by the murderer of a young Jewish couple in DC and by an Egyptian who torched elderly Jews in Boulder. It was also on a brick thrown through the window of the Butcherie last week, and was shouted by the criminal who last year stabbed a young Jewish man in Brooklyn.
>
> I would also like to call your attention to the email below that TMM Omar Mabrouk sent to me last year when I complained about graffiti with the same slogan.
>
> Omar, your blatant antisemitism does not intimidate me. Jews come from Israel, later renamed Palestine. No amount of abuse can change that.
>
> Lisa Shatz TMM p 11
>
> > On Nov 14, 2024, at 6:55 AM, OmarM_P5 via groups.io <omarmabrouk=hotmail.com@groups.io>

wrote:

How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Bob Weintraub via groups.io <bobw9090=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jvanderkay@gmail.com
Cc: io brooklinepax@groups; Brookline TM
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 10:10:52 AM

Hi everyone. I have just retired from BU and therefore ask that you use my personal email from now on. Thanks.
Bobw9090@gmail.com.
Bob Weintraub

> On Jun 15, 2025, at 9:06 PM, Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Apologies for the repost to those who were on the original message -- I didn't notice that Marissa had not sent it to the full listserve.
>
> -- Judith
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:00 PM Judith Vanderkay <jvanderkay@gmail.com> wrote:
>> Sorry that I am coming late to this discussion. I am horrified and saddened at this craven display of hate -- as if a kosher butcher shop could actually have anything to do with freeing or not freeing Palestine! I don't care who the perpetrators were, I want them prosecuted to the full extent of the law.
>>
>> I'm a TMM in Precinct 9 and I feel that my neighborhood has been violated! I stand with my Jewish neighbors and friends against this plague of antisemitism that has swept our nation. I hope we can let everyone know that Brookline will not be intimidated. I would eagerly sign such a statement as Marissa mentions.
>>
>> -- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee
>>
>> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 10:16 AM Marissa Vogt <vogt4brookline@gmail.com> wrote:
>>> Hi TMMA officers and P9 TMMs,
>>>
>>> I am heartened to see so many of our TMM colleagues so swiftly and unequivocally condemning the anti-Semitic vandalism at the Butcherie by sending messages to the listserv, but since the listserv is essentially only read by us TMMs it seems like a public statement signed by TMMs and shared more widely could be more meaningful. Perhaps the TMMA officers and/or the P9 TMMs (I believe the Butcherie is located in P9?) could lead in drafting a statement condemning this action (and all anti-Semitism) and stating our support for our Jewish neighbors and businesses, then invite the other ~240 of us TMMs to sign? I would be happy to sign on to such a statement.
>>>
>>> Thanks,
>>> Marissa
>>>
>>> --
>>> Marissa Vogt (she/her/hers)
>>> Town Meeting Member, Precinct 6 & Library Trustee

On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:56 AM Anthony Buono via groups.io <anthonybuono728=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I also want to give the strongest possible condemnation to the vile people who would do such a thing.
>
> The State of Israel is not a stand-in for Jewish people. Conflating the two is not only ignorant, it is antisemitic at the highest level. Jewish communities should never be targeted for the actions of a government.
>
> Its gross. And it won't be tolerated here. I hope the police are able to find who did this and punish them accordingly.
>
> Thank you to the members of the select board who have swiftly taken action on this act of violence and issued statements.
>
> Solidarity,
> Anthony Buono
> TMM P9
>
> On Sun, Jun 15, 2025 at 9:46 AM Lynda Roseman via groups.io <leroseman=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Adding my voice to the condemnation of this act.
> > This is horrifying.
> > Lynda Roseman, Precinct 14
> >
> > On Jun 15, 2025, at 9:07 AM, David Pearlman via groups.io <dpearlman=brooklinema.gov@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > I agree with you, Charlie. The symbolic nature of the target cannot be construed in any other way but as an anti-Semitic message of hate, intimidation, and violence. Scott has posted the highly disturbing parallels to Crystal Nacht.
> >
> > David Pearlman, Vice Chair of the Select Board
> >
> > > On 6/15/2025 8:56:55 AM, Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Call this what it is. It is antisemitic violence. Vandalizing a Jewish grocery store for whatever reason or rationale because it is Jewish is antisemitism. In Brookline. We must all deplore it, universally.
> > >
> > > Charlie Homer
> > > TMM Pct 8
> > >
> > > On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:52 AM, Carolyn Thall via groups.io <cthall68=comcast.net@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > This is incredibly disturbing. In my view, this is more than vandalism; it is violence. In our community, on our 'Main Street,' where we live and our children go to school.

As a resident, parent, and School Committee member, this rattles me deeply. I'm not sure yet how to articulate the complexity of my concern. For now, suffice it to say I hope all who care about the safety of our community and our children will think deeply about how words turn into action.

Carolyn Thall
Pct 16

<10c81596-9eff-48a1-b1a1-8297b6ab897f.jpeg>

On Jun 15, 2025, at 8:10 AM, Jonathan Abbett via groups.io <jma=abbett.org@groups.io> wrote:

Brick through the window. I received these photos this morning...

<b2d2411f-dc3c-494a-8ed1-460240ec4836.jpeg>

<746abfb8-3fb5-4edc-a4ad-38ea8643b250.jpeg>

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Cathleen Cavell via groups.io <cathleencavell=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: jesse.hefter@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 10:29:35 AM

Thank you to Jesse Hefter and others who corrected the implication I mentioned on this chain two weeks ago that anti-Arab or anti-Muslim hate was tantamount to anti-semitism. I was reading the term literally but I recognize that it is intended to apply to Jews alone. Sadly, hate is not confined to any group or ethnicity.
Cathleen Cavell
TMM 1

On Wed, Jun 18, 2025 at 12:33 PM Jesse Hefter via groups.io <jesse.hefter=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Dear TMMs:
>
> It is important in this conversation that we are crystal clear about what antisemitism is. Antisemitism (or Judeophobia/Jew Hatred) is defined as hostility or discrimination against Jewish people. It is true that there are other Semitic peoples, but it is not true that hostility or discrimination towards Arabs can be described as antisemitism.
>
> The word antisemitism, coined in the 19th century by German antisemite Friedrich Wilhelm Adolph Marr, is not a statement about the Semites; it is a statement about Jews as an ethnicity. This means that wherever Jews live and whatever nationality they are, antisemitism applies to hate, discrimination, and terror visited upon them by others.
>
> We can all agree that hatred of others has terrifying consequences. We can also agree that, to the extent possible, we all believe that people can coexist peacefully. However, the incontrovertible fact is that antisemitism is defined as hatred against Jews.
>
> Respectully,
>
> Jesse
>
> --
> Jesse Hefter
> TMM 14

--
Cathleen Cavell
cathleencavell@gmail.com
617-733-1492 mobile

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lynn-Jones, Sean via groups.io <Sean_Lynn-Jones=hks.harvard.edu@groups.io>
To: io brooklinepax@groups; Brookline TM
Cc: Sean Lynn-Jones
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Change of Email Address
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 11:06:21 AM

Dear Colleagues,
Like Bob Weintraub (and congratulations to Bob on his retirement!), I have a new email address.
On Monday, June 30, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., my Sean_Lynn-Jones@hks.harvard.edu email address will become inactive. Any emails sent to that email address will bounce back. I will not receive them.
Please start using my new email address: Sean.Lynn-Jones@outlook.com
(Note that the new address has a dot after "Sean" instead of an underscore.)
You also can reach me via info@brooklinegreenspace.org regarding anything related to the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance.
Having retired from Harvard over six years ago, I think it is time to stop using the Harvard email address.
I look forward to hearing from you at my new email address.
Best,
Sean Lynn-Jones
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1
President, Brookline GreenSpace Alliance

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Bob Weintraub via groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 28, 2025 10:11 AM
To: jvanderkay@gmail.com
Cc: io brooklinepax@groups <brooklinepax@groups.io>; Brookline TM <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] [brooklinetmma] FYI: Butcherie vandalized overnight

Hi everyone. I have just retired from BU and therefore ask that you use my personal email from now on. Thanks.
Bobw9090@gmail.com.
Bob Weintraub

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Marty Rosenthal via groups.io <martyros=world.std.com@groups.io>
To: BrooklineTMMA@groups.io
Cc: Brookline PAXmembers; Stanley-att Spiegel; dianaspiegel@gmail.com; 0-Marty-gmail 0-Rosenthal
Subject: [brooklinetmma] FW: Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Saturday, June 28, 2025 8:42:13 PM

Please (especially) see the below (Pax listserv) **eml from STANLEY S.,** another All-Star *Poster-Child* for our FoG. Because he's no longer a TMM,***** I'm fw'g it to TMM's, it being IMHO a very enlightening -- & to me surprising -- implicit addendum to my (yesterday, far below) "***BURDEN OF PROOF***" issue re **development, leadership, & Newton**.

***** PS, while here I can't resist adding what STANLEY to me also evokes, the pro-city-ites' b[lather] that we lack "*ACCOUNTABILITY*." I've often criticized their related blindness to & omission of *mayors* (like Newton & Boston) being *almost never defeated* for re-election, surely in part due to **Campaign Contributions**** -- vs our SBdM's (like Mike Merrill, me, Estelle Katz, Don Weitzman, Gil Hoy, Nancy Heller, maybe more). But Stanley reminds me that such actual "*kick[ing] out of office"* is even far more common **for TMM's** – like (very un-fortunately!) him 2-3 years ago. Cf., though, Mcfg's final Report by the 4 city-ites (**bold** in original, *italics* & underlined added)

> Brookline's elections, … ask voters to be familiar with both Town Meeting candidates and Select Board candidates. Each has staggered terms, reducing voters' ability to *"throw the rascals out*" … Town meeting elections… are relatively *opaque*, as only people who follow town politics closely know who their members are and [the] incumbents' views… . *Political science scholarship is clear* on the consequence of a system that is *designed for low turnout* with candidates the average voter … know[s] little about*: such a system protects incumbents.* **Elections Should Maximize Accountability**. Those who favor maintaining a Representative Town Meeting form of government argue forcefully that those elected to Town Meeting and Select Board are held accountable by the very fact of our yearly elections... In this interpretation if we don't like how our policymakers are performing, voters can *use the ballot to kick them out of office*. This is *unconvincing* as accountability …

PPS: Note also their slipped-in, brazen -- *fraudulent* -- hint that our FoG is "designed for" **lower TURNOUTS**, notwithstanding that the 4 of them very well then knew that one of them [Katherine H] had actually/recently [in WA31] *disproven* Prof. Berry's ludicrous 2024 "report" (WA30's C/R 30/6-7 & App. B-3, "Analysis of Voter Turnout by … Government Type," now buried from WA31 by Mcfg) alleging towns' turnout weakness! Instead, KH -- very professionally! -- wrote (in WA31, "Municipal Elections As a Function of Municipal Government Structure," again my *emphasis*):

> *What does change turnout*? Most research makes clear that *competitive*—not merely contested —municipal races are the main drivers of turnout, in which citizens perceive that their vote can impact the outcome (Haenschen & Jennings, 2019;…). And *competitiveness is not an inherent function of our form of government.* Most likely, *a shift to a City* form of government with elections in odd-year Novembers would *stabilize turnout around 25-30%* as we see in Newton and Cambridge ... *This figure is close to current participation in Brookline (2023, 2024*)

(Have I said before, "*falsus in uno* …"? Always giving people the benefit of the doubt, if not absolution, I'll assume the other 3 just didn't notice what Prof. Berry may have slipped in.)

**** PPPS,** Believe it or not, there's yet another a *bon mot* that I've forgotten to cite -- re *Campaign Contributions* for mayors & councilors, **BARNEY FRANK's** "We're the only human beings in the world who are expected to take thousands of dollars from perfect strangers on important matters and not be affected by it."

"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win"* attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

EARLIER MESSAGE (emphases now added by MRR)

From: BrooklinePAX@groups.io <BrooklinePAX@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Stanley Spiegel via

groups.io
Sent: Saturday, June 28, 2025 5:10 PM
To: 'TMMA' <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline PAXmembers <brooklinepax@groups.io>; Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com>
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; 'John Bassett' <baswolfe@aol.com>; charlie.homer@gmail.com; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?

Colleagues,

We've recently heard much blather by supporters of changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton's city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.

It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.

The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth's Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline's commercial share of its tax base, while a none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton's, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.

Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com> wrote:
>
> [PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]

OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.

Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W**who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully) DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*"
See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10(*emphases* added)**:**

> "In terms of economic development each of the two governments has dedicated offices to promote new commercial activity. But there is *a major difference* in structure beyond this. The negotiating that leads to *getting to yes* has a more direct (and more explicitly political) path *in Newton* than in Brookline. … Newton's political process for "*getting to yes*" on its larger-scale projects is different than what we have in Brookline. *In terms of leadership the most significant difference is surely that Newton has a strong mayor system.* … Newton [h]as a *strong mayor/strong city council* system as the two branches of government are … *balanced in power* … . Mayor Fuller … has done well as *a consensus builder* and has mobilized strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly* … ."

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*"; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**") SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

-

THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT: Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors. And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still **HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaged") "residents" desires to maintain our neighborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all

Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic

Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair

www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;

~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**

[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/

listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]

"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);

"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett

<baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.

Charlie Homer

TMM Pct 8

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> TMM P9
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The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

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Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

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Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

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Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io<anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA

<brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint

Town Meeting Member Precinct 5

Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044

Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast

Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe

@anthonyflint

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>
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> ---
>
> **From:**brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io<baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett

26 Searle Ave.

Brookline, MA 02445

617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA
Cc: Stanley Spiegel
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Fw: [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2025 6:08:36 AM

Yesterday, Stanley Spiegel sent a message reporting actual facts, based on actual research. I'm sure that many of you have seen it, but for those who have not, Stanley's report may be of interest.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Stanley Spiegel <sdspiegel@att.net>
To: 'TMMA' <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline PAXmembers <brooklinepax@groups.io>; Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com>
Cc: "sgadsby@foleyhoag.com" <sgadsby@foleyhoag.com>; "anthony.flint@gmail.com" <anthony.flint@gmail.com>; 'John Bassett' <baswolfe@aol.com>; "charlie.homer@gmail.com" <charlie.homer@gmail.com>; "muttychristopher@gmail.com" <muttychristopher@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 28, 2025 at 05:11:34 PM EDT
Subject: Re: [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?

Colleagues,

We've recently heard much blather by supporters of changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton's city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.

It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.

The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth's Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline's commercial share of its tax base, while a none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton's, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.

Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential

housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com> wrote:
>
> [PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]
>
> OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.
>
> Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W**who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully) DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*" See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10(*emphases* added)**:**

> "In terms of economic development each of the two governments has dedicated offices to promote new commercial activity. But there is *a major difference* in structure beyond this. The negotiating that leads to *getting to yes* has a more direct (and more explicitly political) path *in Newton* than in Brookline. … Newton's political process for "*getting to yes*" on its larger-scale projects is different than what we have in Brookline. *In terms of leadership the most significant difference is surely that Newton has a strong mayor system.* … Newton [h]as a *strong mayor/strong city council* system as the two branches of government are … *balanced in power* … . Mayor Fuller … has done well as *a consensus builder*and has mobilized strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly* … ."

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*'; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT: Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors.
And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and

lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still **HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaed") "residents" desires to maintain our neihborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all

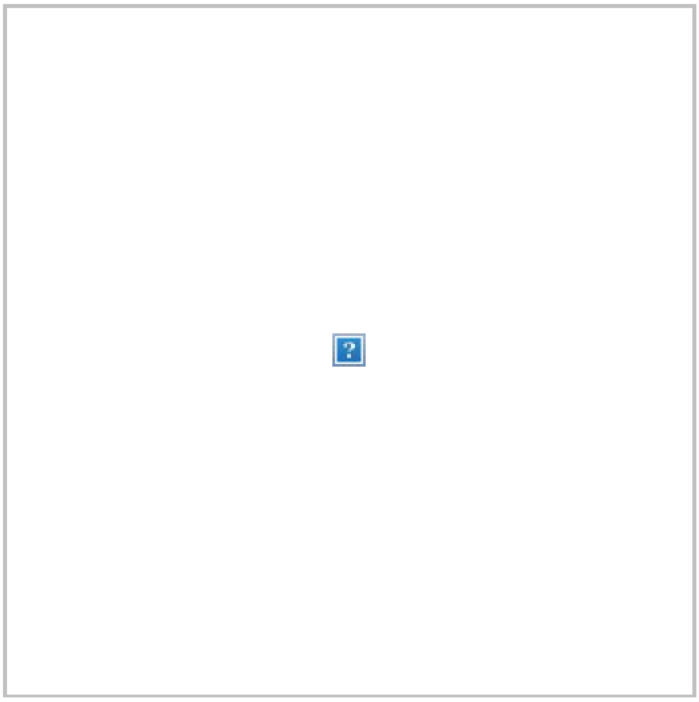
Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV
Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

> **From:** brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
> **Sent:** Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
> **To:** muttychristopher@gmail.com
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> **Subject:** Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.
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Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
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Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
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@anthonyflint

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Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
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John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445

617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Michael Rubenstein via groups.io <mrubenstein=brooklinema.gov@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Change of Email Address
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2025 2:43:33 PM

Sean & Bob,

For those of us who view messages from this group on the web instead of in our email, your email addresses are partially redacted. This is a security feature in case malicious agents get access to the messages.

The administrators of the group can disable this security feature if they so choose, but, in the mean time, please send me your new email addresses via email, and I will reply with my updated email addresses as well.

Michael Rubenstein
Town Meeting Member At Large

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Ariel Gruzman via groups.io <agruzman=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Anti-Semitic vandalism in Brookline and Boston
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2025 4:24:19 PM

Akiva, I think it would be most appropriate that before you rush to demand apologies on behalf of your friend, you and your coalition start by apologizing to me, my family, my neighbors, and a large part of Brookline for your contribution in making us less safe in this town.

Apologize for hosting Leila Farsakh at one of your so-called “peace” events held at the FRR School, a person who openly glorified the October 7 massacre in her writing. Or for organizing a panel on “understanding Hamas,” where you tried to whitewash a terrorist organization while blaming the United States and Israel for the failures of Palestinians and the Arab world. Or for pushing BDS-style resolutions (twice) in this town. Or for cultivating a toxic mix of antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and Gen Y/Z ignorance , all conveniently masked by your Yiddishkeit.

The only thing I agree with you on is that this is not the forum to define what antisemitism is and what is a legitimate political criticism. But rest assured, we won’t stand by and let antisemites and those who oppose a Jewish state to define it so they can feel better about themselves.

Ariel Gruzman

TMM5

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	charlie.homer@gmail.com
Cc:	brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date:	Sunday, June 29, 2025 4:39:22 PM

Dear Town Meeting Members,

I'd just like to share with you some of the emails that Omar addressed to me (and some other Jews) which are personal attacks. Since, among other things, he belittles me when I point out antisemitic graffiti, when I defend Israel, or **even when I try to discuss a subject with no connection to Jews or Israel as in this thread,** and does not point to facts or flaws in my arguments, I think these attacks are antisemitic. I think it's important that people call out antisemitism as they should call out any form of racism.

1. In response to my urging town meeting in this thread to address the housing crisis lest we choose to go the route of socialism, as New Yorkers may do, which has zero to do with Jews or the war in the Middle East, (6/24/25):

Oh come on Lisa. Let's be honest about why you're worried about that specific mayoral candidate.

Omar Mabrouk TMMp5

2. Email from Omar from 11/14/24 that was a response to my alerting the town about antisemitic graffiti such as "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" painted on various street corners". I just re-sent this because I saw more "Free Palestine" graffiti a few days ago, but I'm not sure you all saw it:

How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

3. In response to several emails about a School Committee that concerned the Day of Racial Reckoning and Solidarity where I pointed out among other things that keffiyehs are not merely cultural garments; that they have been adopted as symbols in response to the slaughter of Jews that took place on October 7, 2023. This symbol is prominently displayed at protests where chants, slogans, and signs openly call for the death of Israel and Jews. The Neil, here, is Neil Gordon. 12/17/24:

Awwww, wearing a Keffiyeh hurts your sensibilities, does it Neil? I guess we only love freedom in this country when it applies cultures, symbols and language we approve of. If you're lucky Trump will ban the Keffiyeh,, ban slogans such as "Free Palestine" or terms like "West Bank" or "Occupation". I hope that will make you, Lisa and others feel nice and fuzzy inside. Shameless simply cannot recognize shameless.

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

4. The next email was addressed to Jesse Hefter in response to his writing, "I am sorely troubled by this depiction as it would suggest that the children were somehow singled out or identified by Israeli security or military forces and killed. You don't provide any context around this statement. I will suggest that it is more likely that the children died (and it is extremely sad that they died) during dangerous activities going on in Judea and Samaria between Israeli forces and Arabs." 11/27/24:

Yes,, Judea and Samaria - spoken like a true Kahanist... And let me guess, there is no Occupation (like PAX would assert by using quotes when referring to this reality), Palestinians don't exist (you prefer the term "Arab", right?), Settlements are just Israeli communities, etc. If these are your views, then I find it quite worriesome that you're anywhere near our school system.

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

5. In response to my comments at the advisory committee about a ceasefire article, when I pointed out that there were no protests or cease fire resolutions for the war in Yemen, where over 377,000 people died as a consequence of the war, millions were on the brink of famine, and the US supported Saudi Arabia in their fight against the Houthi rebels 10/11/24:

And to Lisa - your bias is so strong that it doesn't matter what anyone says, or what Israel does.. You reveal your inability to discuss this in a civilized way every time you're given the floor. You'll never see the other side of the argument. You'll never understand how this war impacts the people you disagree with. You will always justify Israel's actions, and evidence of crimes be damned. To paint the petitioners (as Ariel Guzman did at SB) as operatives in some grand conspiracy is laughable. You (and many of your colleagues) continue to shield Israel from any criticism even when its clear that Israel's right wing extremists are using the tragedy of October 7th to enact revenge, settlement, displacement and destruction. I think its these policies that serve to deligitimize Israel within the international community, not our call to stop the war.

Omar Mabrouk

On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 10:27 PM Charles Homer via groups.io <charlie.homer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> If folks are interested, the Bipartisan Policy Center is hosting a webinar on "rent regulation: (aka rent control, rent stabilization) on July 10th. https://bipartisanpolicy.org/event/rent-regulation-in-practice-economic-insights-and-regional-perspectives/
>
> It would be good to have updated data and insights on this to inform our deliberations.
>
> -Charlie Homer
> TMM Pct 8
>
> On Thu, Jun 26, 2025 at 10:03 AM Mark Penzel via groups.io <markpenzel=yahoo.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > I'd like to second this thought and highlight that one of Germany's main post-war parties, and sometimes the lead partner in a governing coalition, has been the SPD, the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany). The first chancellor it provided was Willy Brandt, who got his start as Mayor of West Berlin.
>
> --
> Charlie Homer
> TMM Pct 8
> Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: charlie.homer@gmail.com; lisafshatz@gmail.com
Cc: brooklinetmma@groups.io
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] WSJ - New York's Housing Crisis Is So Bad That a Socialist Might Become Mayor
Date: Sunday, June 29, 2025 5:18:15 PM

Remember, Lisa: When you repeat a libel, you spread it more widely.

(No, I do not mean to imply that Omar or anyone else has libeled someone on this list, but I offer that thought to those who might hurl such accusations.)

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Sunday, June 29, 2025 at 04:39:22 PM EDT, Lisa Shatz via groups.io <lisafshatz=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Dear Town Meeting Members,

I'd just like to share with you some of the emails that Omar addressed to me (and some other Jews) which are personal attacks. Since, among other things, he belittles me when I point out antisemitic graffiti, when I defend Israel, or **even when I try to discuss a subject with no connection to Jews or Israel as in this thread,** and does not point to facts or flaws in my arguments, I think these attacks are antisemitic. I think it's important that people call out antisemitism as they should call out any form of racism.

> **1. In response to my urging town meeting in this thread to address the housing crisis lest we choose to go the route of socialism, as New Yorkers may do, which has zero to do with Jews or the war in the Middle East, (6/24/25):**
>
> *Oh come on Lisa. Let's be honest about why you're worried about that specific mayoral candidate.*
>
> *Omar Mabrouk TMMp5*
>
> **2. Email from Omar from 11/14/24 that was a response to my alerting the town about antisemitic graffiti such as "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" painted on various street corners". I just re-sent this because I saw more "Free Palestine" graffiti a few days ago, but I'm not sure you all saw it:**
>
> *How fragile you must be if "Free Palestine" and "Free Gaza" are intimidating and considered*

antisemitic to you? Do you even hear yourself at this point? Yes, Palestinians live under a military occupation.. you know that. People seeking freedom from that system (and their supporters) are really that threatening to you? If so, you really should recalibrate. Great news for you though - your next president is stocking his cabinet with folks who think just like you! Maybe he'll ban the word "Palestine" so you can live a little more comfortably. Maybe he'll deport me and my family for supporting Palestinian rights.. Whatever makes you happy!

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

3. In response to several emails about a School Committee that concerned the Day of Racial Reckoning and Solidarity where I pointed out among other things that keffiyehs are not merely cultural garments; that they have been adopted as symbols in response to the slaughter of Jews that took place on October 7, 2023. This symbol is prominently displayed at protests where chants, slogans, and signs openly call for the death of Israel and Jews. The Neil, here, is Neil Gordon. 12/17/24:

Awwww, wearing a Keffiyeh hurts your sensibilities, does it Neil? I guess we only love freedom in this country when it applies cultures, symbols and language we approve of. If you're lucky Trump will ban the Keffiyeh,, ban slogans such as "Free Palestine" or terms like "West Bank" or "Occupation". I hope that will make you, Lisa and others feel nice and fuzzy inside. Shameless simply cannot recognize shameless.

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

4. The next email was addressed to Jesse Hefter in response to his writing, "I am sorely troubled by this depiction as it would suggest that the children were somehow singled out or identified by Israeli security or military forces and killed. You don't provide any context around this statement. I will suggest that it is more likely that the children died (and it is extremely sad that they died) during dangerous activities going on in Judea and Samaria between Israeli forces and Arabs." 11/27/24:

Yes,, Judea and Samaria - spoken like a true Kahanist... And let me guess, there is no Occupation (like PAX would assert by using quotes when referring to this reality), Palestinians don't exist (you prefer the term "Arab", right?), Settlements are just Israeli communities, etc. If these are your views, then I find it quite worriesome that you're anywhere near our school system.

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5

5. In response to my comments at the advisory committee about a ceasefire article, when I pointed out that there were no protests or cease fire resolutions for the war in Yemen, where over 377,000 people died as a consequence of the war, millions were on

the brink of famine, and the US supported Saudi Arabia in their fight against the Houthi rebels 10/11/24:

And to Lisa - your bias is so strong that it doesn't matter what anyone says, or what Israel does.. You reveal your inability to discuss this in a civilized way every time you're given the floor. You'll never see the other side of the argument. You'll never understand how this war impacts the people you disagree with. You will always justify Israel's actions, and evidence of crimes be damned. To paint the petitioners (as Ariel Guzman did at SB) as operatives in some grand conspiracy is laughable. You (and many of your colleagues) continue to shield Israel from any criticism even when its clear that Israel's right wing extremists are using the tragedy of October 7th to enact revenge, settlement, displacement and destruction. I think its these policies that serve to deligitimize Israel within the international community, not our call to stop the war.

Omar Mabrouk
TMMp5 - Petitioner WA20

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> Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	sdspiegel@att.net
Cc:	TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Marty Rosenthal; sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; charlie.homer@gmail.com; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Sunday, June 29, 2025 8:38:33 PM

Stanley, these figures are eye-opening! Thank you so much.

-- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee

On Sat, Jun 28, 2025 at 5:11 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> We've recently heard much blather by supporters of changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton's city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.
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> Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.
>
> ~ Stanley Spiegel
>
> *Sent from a mobile device.*
> *Please excuse typos.*
>
> > On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com> wrote:

[PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]

OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.

Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W**who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully) DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*" See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10(*emphases* added)**:**

> "In terms of economic development each of the two governments has dedicated offices to promote new commercial activity. But there is *a major difference* in structure beyond this. The negotiating that leads to *getting to yes* has a more direct (and more explicitly political) path *in Newton* than in Brookline. … Newton's political process for "*getting to yes*" on its larger-scale projects is different than what we have in

> Brookline. *In terms of leadership the most significant difference is surely that Newton has a strong mayor system.* … Newton [h]as a *strong mayor/strong city council* system as the two branches of government are … *balanced in power* … . Mayor Fuller … has done well as *a consensus builder*and has mobilized strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly* … ."

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*'; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT: Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors. And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still**HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaed") "residents" desires to maintain our neihborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all

Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/

listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM Christopher Mutty via groups.io<muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I often hear that a benefit of becoming a city is the economic development that will follow from a streamlined government. Take a look at the Riverside station site in Newton which has been under development since 2009. See below for a column from the Charles River Chamber newsletter today.
>
> Christopher Mutty
> TMM P9

A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station



Scholars estimate that it took 26 years to build the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

In September, developer Robert Korff of Mark Development will return to the Newton City Council to seek approval for a project that's been in the works in various forms since 2009 and has been before the council multiple times since 2011.

The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal

challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

Then let the building, finally, begin.

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:47 AM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io<anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>

Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

> On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Dear TMMs:
>
> The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.
>
> Regards, Sandy Gadsby
>
> ---
>
> **From:**brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io<baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
> **Sent:** Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
> **To:** John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
> **Cc:** Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
> **Subject:** [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?
>
> Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they

acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	jvanderkay@gmail.com
Cc:	Stanley Spiegel; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Gadsby, Sandy; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 11:18:47 AM

Figures can be eye-opening without being “significant”.

One can often find coincidences in data. Coincidences don’t establish correlation.

One needs more than coincidence to draw conclusions.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

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Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110;
martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/
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To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
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Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

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To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
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<brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

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John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	andrewmfischer@gmail.com; ranangle1@gmail.com
Cc:	jvanderkay@gmail.com; Stanley Spiegel; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Sandy Gadsby; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 12:02:33 PM

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 30, 2025 at 11:33:13 AM EDT, Richard Nangle via groups.io <ranangle1=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

A lawyer and a statistician walk into a bar…

> On Jun 30, 2025, at 11:18 AM, Andrew Fischer via groups.io <andrewmfischer=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Figures can be eye-opening without being “significant”.
>
> One can often find coincidences in data. Coincidences don’t establish correlation.
>
> One needs more than coincidence to draw conclusions.
>
> Andrew Fischer
> Town Meeting Member
> Precinct 13
> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> 617-293-8304
>
> > On Jun 29, 2025, at 8:38 PM, Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Stanley, these figures are eye-opening! Thank you so much.
> >
> > -- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee
> >
> > On Sat, Jun 28, 2025 at 5:11 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:
> > > Colleagues,

We've recently heard much blather by supporters of changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton's city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.

It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.

The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth's Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline's commercial share of its tax base, while a none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton's, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.

Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com> wrote:
>
> [PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs

Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]

OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.

Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

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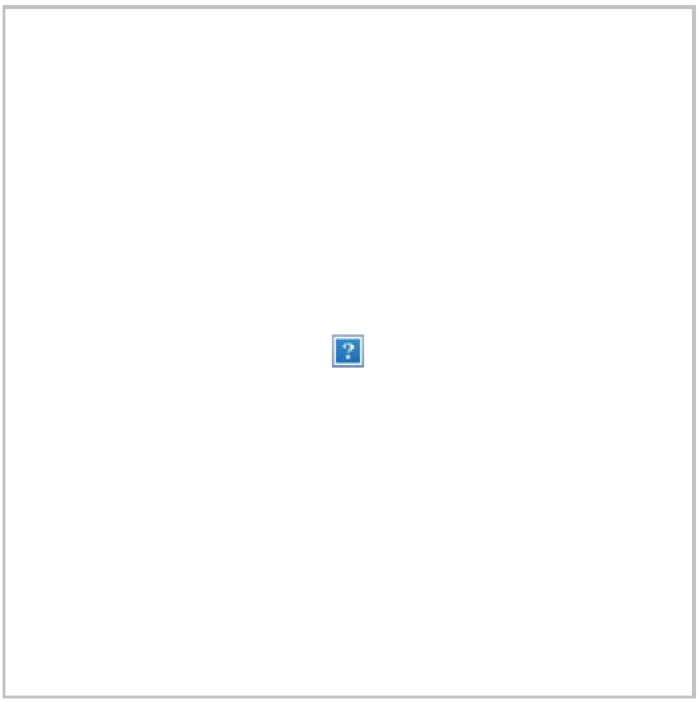
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Neil Gordon via groups.io <neil=nrgordon.com@groups.io>
To: andrewmfischer@gmail.com
Cc: jvanderkay@gmail.com; Spiegel Stanley; TMMA; PAXmembers Brookline; Rosenthal Martin; Gadsby Sandy; anthony.flint@gmail.com; Bassett John; Homer Charles; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 12:28:56 PM

The MCFC for the most part reached conclusions without establishing much of anything, coincidental or otherwise.

Regards, Neil, TMM1

Neil R. Gordon, President
N.R. Gordon & Company, Inc.
87 Ivy Street, Brookline, MA 02446
(508) 265-1362
www.liquiditymatters.com

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PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that **(A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors. And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

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Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
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XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>

Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

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That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

Then let the building, finally, begin.

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:47 AM
Sandy Gadsby
via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io>
wrote:

Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io>
on behalf of Anthony Flint
via groups.io<anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy

<SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>;
TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>;
Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett

via groups.io<baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that

were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

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Cc:	jvanderkay@gmail.com; Stanley Spiegel; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Sandy Gadsby; anthony.flint@gmail.com; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 12:38:14 PM

News would be if they walked out of a bar.....

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>
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[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
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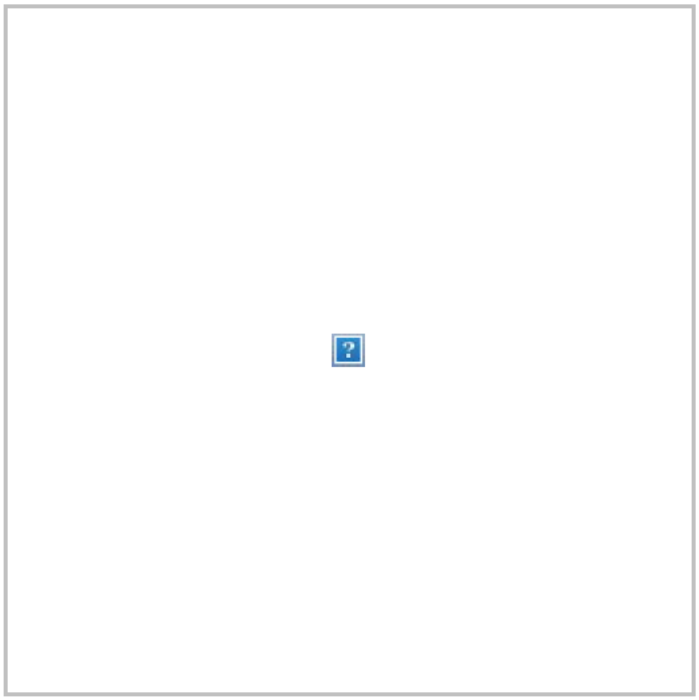
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Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

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Then let the building, finally, begin.

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Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io<anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io <brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline.

Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	sdspiegel@att.net
Cc:	Andrew Fischer; jvanderkay@gmail.com; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Sandy Gadsby; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 1:46:55 PM

Colleagues,

I thank Stanley for helping to make this a clear choice. By this logic, if Newton is underperforming Brookline, then any form of city government would likely underperform town government. Why bother to explore any options?

For those who support the charter process, there may be forms of government that could do better than our current form of government. All we ask is that we explore the options and either reaffirm what we have now or explore something different.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 12:54 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:

> Andrew et al,
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> Coincidences?? What coincidences?? I simply pointed out that existing data provides no basis for asserting that the city of Newton is any more successful at promoting economic development than is the town of Brookline. This conclusion follows empirically from the recent recorded experiences of Newton and Brookline, and has nothing to do with any manifestation of randomness or coincidence. Perhaps city proponents can come up with other relevant examples that demonstrate the superiority of city governments in fostering economic development, but Newton seems not to be a case in point.
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> (Note: this response will not be sent to the TMMA unless a TMM elects to forward it.)
>
> ~ Stanley
>
> *Sent from a mobile device.*
> *Please excuse typos.*

On Jun 30, 2025, at 11:18 AM, Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com> wrote:

Figures can be eye-opening without being “significant”.

One can often find coincidences in data. Coincidences don’t establish correlation.

One needs more than coincidence to draw conclusions.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

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>
> Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton’s city

government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

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> OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was

among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.

Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W**who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully) DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*" See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10(*emphases* added)**:**

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strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly … .*"

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*'; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT: Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that **(A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors. And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still**HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline

mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaed") "residents" desires to maintain our neihborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all

Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."* attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I

would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM Christopher Mutty via groups.io<muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> I often hear that a benefit of becoming a city is the economic development that will follow from a streamlined government. Take a look at the Riverside station site in Newton which has been under development since 2009. See below for a column from the Charles River Chamber newsletter today.
>
> Christopher Mutty
> TMM P9
>
> **A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station**
>
> 
>
> Scholars estimate that it took 26 years to

build the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

In September, developer Robert Korff of Mark Development will return to the Newton City Council to seek approval for a project that's been in the works in various forms since 2009 and has been before the council multiple times since 2011.

The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

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John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

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Charlie Homer
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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA
Subject: Fw: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 2:05:16 PM

For members of TMMA who have not seen Stanley Spiegel's response to Andrew Fischer's message earlier today, it is below.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Stanley Spiegel <sdspiegel@att.net>
To: Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com>
Cc: "jvanderkay@gmail.com" <jvanderkay@gmail.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline PAXmembers <brooklinepax@groups.io>; Martin Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com>; Sandy Gadsby <sgadsby@foleyhoag.com>; "anthony.flint@gmail.com" <anthony.flint@gmail.com>; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; Charles Homer <charlie.homer@gmail.com>; "muttychristopher@gmail.com" <muttychristopher@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2025 at 12:54:37 PM EDT
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?

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[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*'; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET

checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT: Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors. And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still**HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaed") "residents" desires to maintain our neihborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all

Marty Rosenthal , TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair

www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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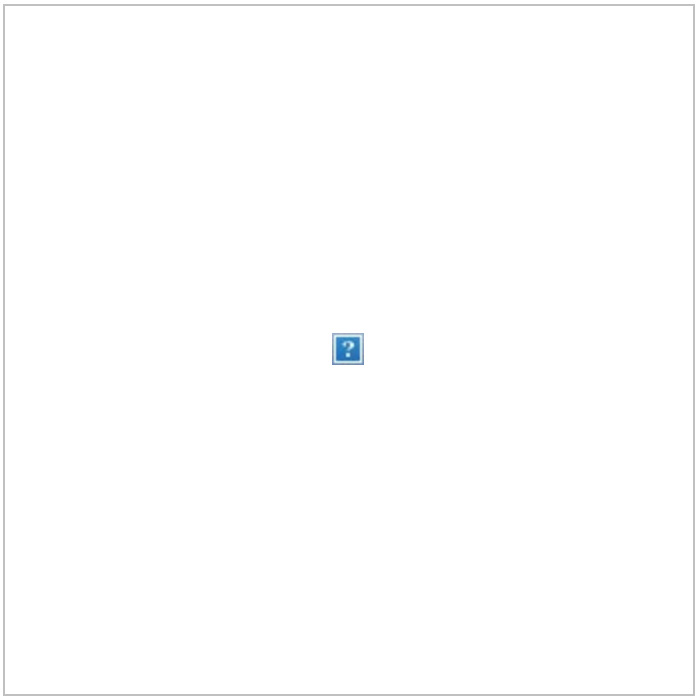
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

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Christopher Mutty
via groups.io<muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io>
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TMM P9

A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station



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The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

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Then let the building, finally, begin.

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Regards, Sandy Gadsby

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TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>;
Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get

an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io<baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is

governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator.
Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now.
Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees.
Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

Groups.io Links:

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA
Subject: Fw: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 2:30:59 PM

Forwarded by John Bassett
p6

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: STANLEY SPIEGEL <sdspiegel@att.net>
To: Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com>
Cc: "jvanderkay@gmail.com" <jvanderkay@gmail.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline PAXmembers <brooklinepax@groups.io>; Martin Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com>; Sandy Gadsby <sgadsby@foleyhoag.com>; "anthony.flint@gmail.com" <anthony.flint@gmail.com>; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; Charles Homer <charlie.homer@gmail.com>; "muttychristopher@gmail.com" <muttychristopher@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2025 at 12:54:35 PM EDT
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?

Andrew et al,

Coincidences?? What coincidences?? I simply pointed out that existing data provides no basis for asserting that the city of Newton is any more successful at promoting economic development than is the town of Brookline. This conclusion follows empirically from the recent recorded experiences of Newton and Brookline, and has nothing to do with any manifestation of randomness or coincidence. Perhaps city proponents can come up with other relevant examples that demonstrate the superiority of city governments in fostering economic development, but Newton seems not to be a case in point.

(Note: this response will not be sent to the TMMA unless a TMM elects to forward it.)

~ Stanley

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

On Jun 30, 2025, at 11:18 AM, Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com> wrote:

Figures can be eye-opening without being “significant”.

One can often find coincidences in data. Coincidences don’t establish correlation.

One needs more than coincidence to draw conclusions.

Andrew Fischer

Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

On Jun 29, 2025, at 8:38 PM, Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Stanley, these figures are eye-opening! Thank you so much.

-- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee

On Sat, Jun 28, 2025 at 5:11 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> We've recently heard much blather by supporters of changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton's city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.
>
> It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.
>
> The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth's Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline's commercial share of its tax base, while a none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton's, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.
>
> Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.
>
> Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.
>
> ~ Stanley Spiegel
>
> *Sent from a mobile device.*
> *Please excuse typos.*

On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com> wrote:

[PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]

OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.

Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W**who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully)

DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*" See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10(*emphases* added)**:**

> "In terms of economic development each of the two governments has dedicated offices to promote new commercial activity. But there is *a major difference* in structure beyond this. The negotiating that leads to *getting to yes* has a more direct (and more explicitly political) path *in Newton* than in Brookline. … Newton's political process for "*getting to yes*" on its larger-scale projects is different than what we have in Brookline. *In terms of leadership the most significant difference is surely that Newton has a strong mayor system. …* Newton [h]as a *strong mayor/strong city council* system as the two branches of government are … *balanced in power* … . Mayor Fuller … has done well as *a consensus builder*and has mobilized strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly* … ."

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*'; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

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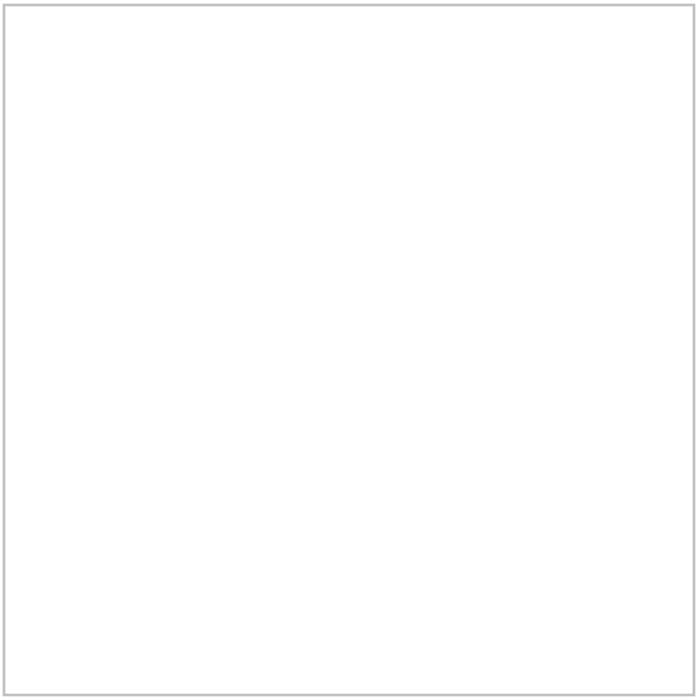
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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Martin Dopazo
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 2:34:10 PM

Past Town Counsel Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert has lost her brother, Martin Dopazo.
Martin's death notice is in Sunday's Globe.
John Bassett
p6

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	STANLEY SPIEGEL
Cc:	Andrew Fischer; jvanderkay@gmail.com; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Sandy Gadsby; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 3:22:48 PM

Colleagues,

In addition to what Stanley has mentioned, any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable.

As for what the statute says or does not say, it will be very important for voters to assess charter candidates (should voters approve a charter process) as to which candidates are open in their thinking and which candidates are resolved to enact certain predetermined outcomes. Candidates should be clear about whether or not they would propose more hearings and public conversation than the statute requires. Brookline voters will vote according to their preferences.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

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> > I thank Stanley for helping to make this a clear choice. By this logic, if Newton is underperforming Brookline, then any form of city government would likely underperform town government. Why bother to explore any options?
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> Coincidences?? What coincidences?? I simply pointed out that existing data provides no basis for asserting that the city of Newton is any more successful at promoting economic development than is the town of Brookline. This conclusion follows empirically from the recent recorded experiences of Newton and Brookline, and has nothing to do with any manifestation of randomness or coincidence. Perhaps city proponents can come up with other relevant examples that demonstrate the superiority of city governments in fostering economic development, but Newton seems not to be a case in point.
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-- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee

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Colleagues,

We've recently heard much blather by supporters of changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton's city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.

It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.

The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth's Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline's commercial share of its tax base, while a none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton's, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.

Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Marty

Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com> wrote:

[PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]

OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.

Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very

tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W**who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully) DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*" See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10(*emphases* added)**:**

> "In terms of economic development each of the two governments has dedicated offices to promote new commercial activity. But there is *a major difference* in structure beyond this. The negotiating that leads to *getting to yes* has a more direct (and more explicitly political) path *in Newton* than in Brookline. … Newton's political process for "*getting to yes*" on its larger-scale projects is different than what we have in Brookline. *In terms of leadership the most significant difference is surely that Newton has a strong mayor system.* … Newton [h]as a *strong mayor/strong city council* system as the two branches of government are … *balanced in power* … . Mayor Fuller … has done well as *a consensus builder*and has mobilized strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly* … ."

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*"; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South*

Boston's House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

***THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT*:** Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors.
And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still**HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaed") "residents" desires to maintain our neihborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all

Marty Rosenthal, TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home
office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if**

v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!

[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]

"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);

"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM Christopher Mutty via groups.io<muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

I often hear that a benefit of becoming a city is the economic development that will follow from a streamlined government. Take a look at the Riverside station site in Newton which has been under development since 2009. See below for a column from the Charles River Chamber newsletter today.

Christopher Mutty
TMM P9

A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station



Scholars estimate that it took 26 years to build the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

In September, developer Robert Korff of Mark Development will return to the Newton City Council to seek approval for a project that's been in the works in various forms since 2009 and has been before the council multiple times since 2011.

The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

Then let the building, finally, begin.

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:47 AM Sandy Gadsby

via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io<anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io<baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator.

Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Michael A. Burstein via groups.io <TMMBurstein=mabfan.com@groups.io>
To: brooklinetmma@groups.io; PAX
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Brookline Annexation Debate of 1873
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 3:33:17 PM

I thought folks might appreciate a little historical context, again. Remember when Brookline almost became part of Boston?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston%E2%80%93Brookline_annexation_debate_of_1873

--
Michael A. Burstein
Brookline Library Trustee and Town Meeting Member (Precinct 12)
Pronouns: He/Him/His
TMMBurstein@mabfan.com

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Klein via groups.io <jklein728=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: TMMA
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Martin Dopazo
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 5:09:36 PM

Thanks for the heads up, John. Here is a link to a short obituary from the funeral home: https://www.bellodeafuneralhome.com/obituary/martin-dopazo

Jonathan Klein, TMM P17

> On Jun 30, 2025, at 2:34 PM, John Bassett via groups.io <baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io> wrote:
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Jonathan Klein
TMM P17

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Joslin Murphy via groups.io <joslinmurphy16=gmail.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TMMA
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Hmmm ....
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 7:17:11 PM
Attachments: image.png

I wonder why this photograph is being used to promote the launch of Brookline's contract with Casella Waste Systems - since this "100% electric" truck is Brookline's, and Casella plans to use fossil fueled trucks for solid waste collection in Brookline starting tomorrow?



--
Joslin Murphy, TMM P16

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

Casella Waste Systems begins Town Trash Collection July 1



From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	STANLEY SPIEGEL; jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc:	Andrew Fischer; jvanderkay@gmail.com; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Sandy Gadsby; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 7:26:19 PM

"any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable"

Accountability inheres in the knowledge that one can be voted out. That's why lame duck politicians are enabled to be irresponsible--they cannot be voted out. Indeed, just today I saw a post on a political website, "Thom Tillis, Unleashed," noting that the Republican senator, who announced that he will not be running next year, is much more free than he had been. Members of a charter commission would not face re-election, so they would not be accountable to the voters.

" it will be very important for voters to assess charter candidates...as to which candidates are open in their thinking and which candidates are resolved to enact certain predetermined outcomes. Candidates should be clear about whether or not they would propose more hearings and public conversation than the statute requires. Brookline voters will vote according to their preferences."

Will voters take such a close look at individual candidates? I suggest that the likelihood of that would be much diminished by having the vote on whether there should be a commission at the same time as the vote for individual commission members. As I've noted in the past, that puts a big thumb on the scale in favor of having a commission, and in favor of candidates who have made up their mind that Brookline's current town-meeting system needs to go. That is why the process is undemocratic, and even anti-democratic.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 30, 2025 at 03:22:48 PM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

In addition to what Stanley has mentioned, any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable.

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Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

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~ Stanley

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Please excuse typos.

On Jun 30, 2025, at 11:18 AM, Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com> wrote:

Figures can be eye-opening without being “significant”.

One can often find coincidences in data. Coincidences don’t establish correlation.

One needs more than coincidence to draw conclusions.

Andrew Fischer
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

On Jun 29, 2025, at 8:38 PM, Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Stanley, these figures are eye-opening! Thank you so much.

-- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee

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It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.

The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth’s Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline’s commercial share of its tax base, while a none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton’s, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.

Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

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> [PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]
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> OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not

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[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*'; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

***THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT*:** Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exampla*r of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot

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And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

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Good w-e, all

Marty Rosenthal , TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."* attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

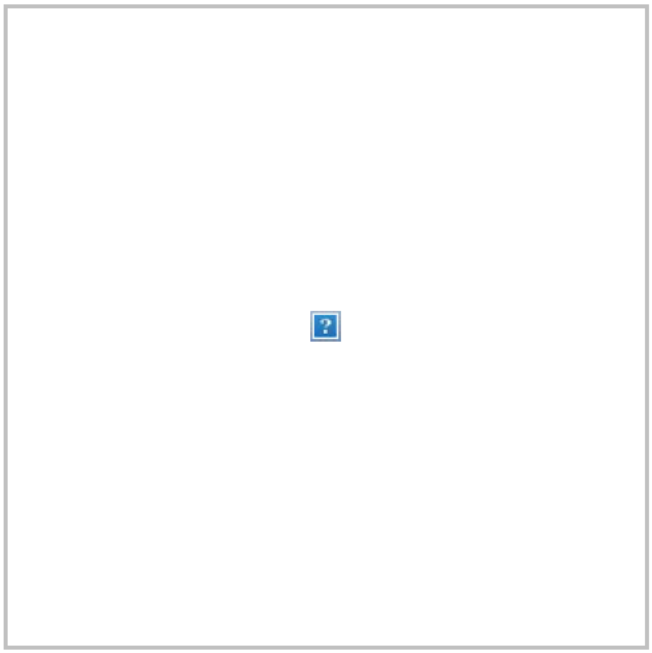
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

From: brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

> On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM Christopher Mutty via groups.io<muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I often hear that a benefit of becoming a city is the economic development that will follow from a streamlined government. Take a look at the Riverside station site in Newton which has been under development since 2009. See below for a column from the Charles River Chamber newsletter today.
>
> Christopher Mutty
> TMM P9
>
> **A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station**



Scholars estimate that it took 26 years to build the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

In September, developer Robert Korff of Mark Development will return to the Newton City Council to seek approval for a project that's been in the works in various forms since 2009 and has been before the council multiple times since 2011.

The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each

version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

Then let the building, finally, begin.

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:47 AM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io<anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>

Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>
Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

> On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Dear TMMs:
>
> The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is

the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett via groups.io<baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and

published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

Groups.io Links:

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Your Subscription | Contact Group Owner | Unsubscribe [redacted]

From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	Jonathan Margolis
Cc:	STANLEY SPIEGEL; Andrew Fischer; jvanderkay@gmail.com; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Sandy Gadsby; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 7:41:56 PM

Colleagues,

I notice that the opponents of charter change are clear with what they stand against. It is their right to stand with the status quo and make its case. It is even their right to question the legitimacy of future elections in a way that, in my view, comes close to statements by our current president about certain elections being rigged.

Part of our role as leaders involves stating what each of us stands for. What will we, all of us on this list, do as leaders to try and address our structural deficit? Address the morale questions of town employees? Increase commercial development?

Putting aside the charter question for the moment, a process that will take years to unfold, what are we collectively committed to do as town leaders to solve the current problems faced by our town?

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 7:26 PM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> "any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable"
>
> Accountability inheres in the knowledge that one can be voted out. That's why lame duck politicians are enabled to be irresponsible--they cannot be voted out. Indeed, just today I saw a post on a political website, "Thom Tillis, Unleashed," noting that the Republican senator, who announced that he will not be running next year, is much more free than he had been. Members of a charter commission would not face re-election, so they would not be accountable to the voters.
>
> " it will be very important for voters to assess charter candidates...as to which candidates are open in their thinking and which candidates are resolved to enact certain predetermined outcomes. Candidates should be clear about whether or not they would propose more hearings and public conversation than the statute requires. Brookline voters will vote according to their preferences."
>
> Will voters take such a close look at individual candidates? I suggest that the likelihood of that would be much diminished by having the vote on whether there should be a commission at the same time as the vote for individual commission members. As I've noted in the past, that puts a big thumb on the scale in favor of having a commission, and in favor of candidates who have made up their mind that Brookline's current town-meeting system needs to go. That is why the process is undemocratic, and even anti-democratic.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee

Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 30, 2025 at 03:22:48 PM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

In addition to what Stanley has mentioned, any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable.

As for what the statute says or does not say, it will be very important for voters to assess charter candidates (should voters approve a charter process) as to which candidates are open in their thinking and which candidates are resolved to enact certain predetermined outcomes. Candidates should be clear about whether or not they would propose more hearings and public conversation than the statute requires. Brookline voters will vote according to their preferences.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 2:40 PM STANLEY SPIEGEL <sdspiegel@att.net> wrote:

> No system of logic of which I am aware states that if Newton is underperforming Brookline regarding economic development, all cities would be likely underperform. That may or may not be true; I made no such statement or inference. I simply reported on what seems to be the case for Newton.
> Additionally, the charter commission statute makes no mention of or requirement for "exploring options." The commissioners would be free to simply propose anything they wish to, the sole statutory requirement being that they hold a public hearing as part of their proceedings.
> It's best not to rely on language that doesn't exist.
>
> *Sent from a mobile device.*
> *Please excuse typos.*
>
> > On Jun 30, 2025, at 1:46 PM, Jonathan Golden <jonathanjgolden@gmail.com> wrote:
> >
> > Colleagues,
> >
> > I thank Stanley for helping to make this a clear choice. By this logic, if Newton is underperforming Brookline, then any form of city government would likely underperform town government. Why bother to explore any options?
> >
> > For those who support the charter process, there may be forms of government that could do better than our current form of government. All we ask is that we explore the options and either reaffirm what we have now or explore something different.
> >
> > Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 12:54 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:

> Andrew et al,
>
> Coincidences?? What coincidences?? I simply pointed out that existing data provides no basis for asserting that the city of Newton is any more successful at promoting economic development than is the town of Brookline. This conclusion follows empirically from the recent recorded experiences of Newton and Brookline, and has nothing to do with any manifestation of randomness or coincidence. Perhaps city proponents can come up with other relevant examples that demonstrate the superiority of city governments in fostering economic development, but Newton seems not to be a case in point.
>
> (Note: this response will not be sent to the TMMA unless a TMM elects to forward it.)
>
> ~ Stanley
>
> *Sent from a mobile device.*
> *Please excuse typos.*
>
> > On Jun 30, 2025, at 11:18 AM, Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com> wrote:
> >
> > Figures can be eye-opening without being “significant”.
> >
> > One can often find coincidences in data. Coincidences don’t establish correlation.
> >
> > One needs more than coincidence to draw conclusions.
> >
> > Andrew Fischer
> > Town Meeting Member
> > Precinct 13
> > andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> > 617-293-8304
> >
> > > On Jun 29, 2025, at 8:38 PM, Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> > >
> > > Stanley, these figures are eye-opening! Thank you so much.
> > >
> > > -- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee
> > >
> > > On Sat, Jun 28, 2025 at 5:11 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:
> > > > Colleagues,
> > > >
> > > > We’ve recently heard much blather by supporters of

changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton's city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.

It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.

The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth's Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline's commercial share of its tax base, while a none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton's, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.

Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

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Marty Rosenthal , TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home
office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA
02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
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Workers of Amer. (1918)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

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Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

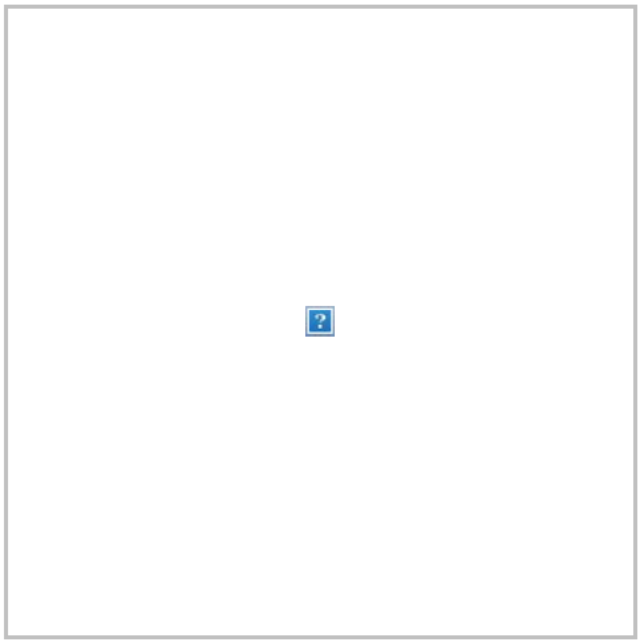
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Christopher Mutty
TMM P9

A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station



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Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

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It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
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@anthonyflint

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Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

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advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
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Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jon Margolis via groups.io <jjmargolis=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To:	jonathanjgolden@gmail.com
Cc:	STANLEY SPIEGEL; Andrew Fischer; jvanderkay@gmail.com; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Sandy Gadsby; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 8:28:24 PM

Jonathan,

If you believe that my most recent post puts me in the same category as Trump, have the courage to come out and say so. And then, perhaps, you can explain how you conclude that, in light of my comments on the nature of the process.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 30, 2025 at 07:41:56 PM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

I notice that the opponents of charter change are clear with what they stand against. It is their right to stand with the status quo and make its case. It is even their right to question the legitimacy of future elections in a way that, in my view, comes close to statements by our current president about certain elections being rigged.

Part of our role as leaders involves stating what each of us stands for. What will we, all of us on this list, do as leaders to try and address our structural deficit? Address the morale questions of town employees? Increase commercial development?

Putting aside the charter question for the moment, a process that will take years to unfold, what are we collectively committed to do as town leaders to solve the current problems faced by our town?

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 7:26 PM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> "any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable"
>
> Accountability inheres in the knowledge that one can be voted out. That's why lame duck politicians are enabled to be irresponsible--they cannot be voted out. Indeed, just today I saw a post on a political website, "Thom Tillis, Unleashed," noting that the Republican senator, who announced that he will not be running next year, is much more free than he had been. Members of a charter commission would not face re-election, so they would not be accountable to the voters.

" it will be very important for voters to assess charter candidates...as to which candidates are open in their thinking and which candidates are resolved to enact certain predetermined outcomes. Candidates should be clear about whether or not they would propose more hearings and public conversation than the statute requires. Brookline voters will vote according to their preferences."

Will voters take such a close look at individual candidates? I suggest that the likelihood of that would be much diminished by having the vote on whether there should be a commission at the same time as the vote for individual commission members. As I've noted in the past, that puts a big thumb on the scale in favor of having a commission, and in favor of candidates who have made up their mind that Brookline's current town-meeting system needs to go. That is why the process is undemocratic, and even anti-democratic.

Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
Brookline, MA 02446
(617) 240-3205
Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam

On Monday, June 30, 2025 at 03:22:48 PM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

In addition to what Stanley has mentioned, any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable.

As for what the statute says or does not say, it will be very important for voters to assess charter candidates (should voters approve a charter process) as to which candidates are open in their thinking and which candidates are resolved to enact certain predetermined outcomes. Candidates should be clear about whether or not they would propose more hearings and public conversation than the statute requires. Brookline voters will vote according to their preferences.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 2:40 PM STANLEY SPIEGEL <sdspiegel@att.net> wrote:

> No system of logic of which I am aware states that if Newton is underperforming Brookline regarding economic development, all cities would be likely underperform. That may or may not be true; I made no such statement or inference. I simply reported on what seems to be the case for Newton.
> Additionally, the charter commission statute makes no mention of or requirement for “exploring options.” The commissioners would be free to simply propose anything they wish to, the sole statutory requirement being that they hold a public hearing as part of their proceedings.
> It’s best not to rely on language that doesn’t exist.
>
> *Sent from a mobile device.*
> *Please excuse typos.*

On Jun 30, 2025, at 1:46 PM, Jonathan Golden <jonathanjgolden@gmail.com> wrote:

Colleagues,

I thank Stanley for helping to make this a clear choice. By this logic, if Newton is underperforming Brookline, then any form of city government would likely underperform town government. Why bother to explore any options?

For those who support the charter process, there may be forms of government that could do better than our current form of government. All we ask is that we explore the options and either reaffirm what we have now or explore something different.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting



On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 12:54 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:

> Andrew et al,
>
> Coincidences?? What coincidences?? I simply pointed out that existing data provides no basis for asserting that the city of Newton is any more successful at promoting economic development than is the town of Brookline. This conclusion follows empirically from the recent recorded experiences of Newton and Brookline, and has nothing to do with any manifestation of randomness or coincidence. Perhaps city proponents can come up with other relevant examples that demonstrate the superiority of city governments in fostering economic development, but Newton seems not to be a case in point.
>
> (Note: this response will not be sent to the TMMA unless a TMM elects to forward it.)
>
> ~ Stanley
>
> *Sent from a mobile device.*
> *Please excuse typos.*
>
> > On Jun 30, 2025, at 11:18 AM, Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com> wrote:
> >
> > Figures can be eye-opening without being “significant”.
> >
> > One can often find coincidences in data. Coincidences don’t establish correlation.
> >
> > One needs more than coincidence to draw conclusions.
> >
> > Andrew Fischer

Town Meeting Member
Precinct 13
andrewmfischer@gmail.com
617-293-8304

On Jun 29, 2025, at 8:38 PM, Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

Stanley, these figures are eye-opening! Thank you so much.

-- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee

On Sat, Jun 28, 2025 at 5:11 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:

Colleagues,

We've recently heard much blather by supporters of changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton's city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator's Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.

It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.

The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth's Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline's commercial share of its tax base, while a none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton's, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.

Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com> wrote:
>
> [PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]
>
> OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.
>
> Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered

(very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W**who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully) DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*" See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10(*emphases* added)**:**

> "In terms of economic development each of the two governments has dedicated offices to promote new commercial activity. But there is *a major difference* in structure beyond this. The negotiating that leads to *getting to yes* has a more direct (and more explicitly political) path *in Newton* than in Brookline. … Newton's political process for "*getting to yes*" on its larger-scale projects is different than what we have in Brookline. *In terms of leadership the most significant difference is surely that Newton has a strong mayor system.* … Newton [h]as a *strong mayor/strong city council* system as the two branches of government are *… balanced in power* … . Mayor Fuller … has done well as *a consensus builder*and has mobilized strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly* … ."

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*'; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder,"

did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT: Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, & our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors.
And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still **HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaed") "residents" desires to maintain our neihborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all
Marty Rosenthal , TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic

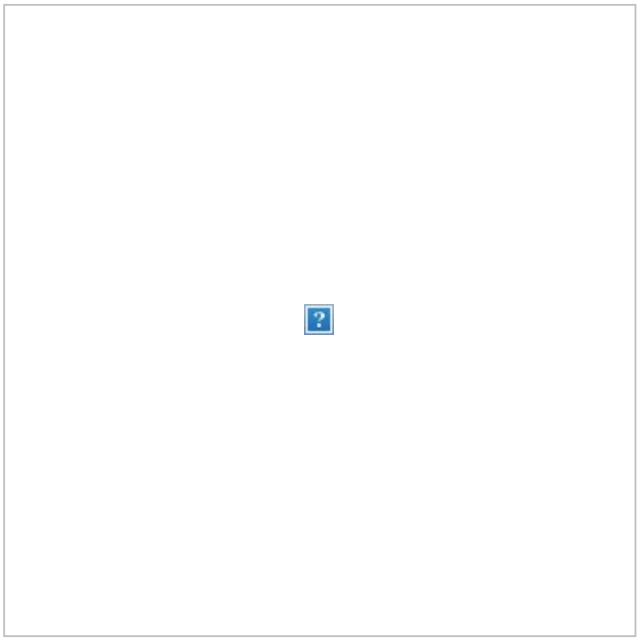
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

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It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..
Anthony Flint

Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
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There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
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--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From:	brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io>
To:	Jonathan Margolis
Cc:	STANLEY SPIEGEL; Andrew Fischer; jvanderkay@gmail.com; TMMA; Brookline PAXmembers; Martin Rosenthal; Sandy Gadsby; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett; Charles Homer; muttychristopher@gmail.com
Subject:	Re: [brooklinetmma] [BrooklinePAX] Should Brookline become a city?
Date:	Monday, June 30, 2025 9:17:28 PM

Colleagues,

Using language like "thumb on the scale" "undemocratic" and "antidemocratic" is language used to push for lower turnout and create a "heads I win, tails you lose scenario." For those who buy the narrative that an election is antidemocratic, they are much less likely to bother to vote. This negativity makes it more likely that the status quo side prevails. Thus, "heads I win"

If the charter process prevails, there is a ready-made narrative to explain the result through a "thumb on the scale" argument and the claim of an antidemocratic election. Thus "tails you lose"

Standing for democracy is more than standing on a street corner. It is about standing up for elections in one's own home community, whether or not your side wins. I am ready for any result of a potential election on the charter question, charter candidates, and any given charter proposal, whether my approach prevails or not. I would hope that any democratically elected leader would be prepared to say the same and acknowledge when the voters have spoken.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 8:28 PM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> Jonathan,
>
> If you believe that my most recent post puts me in the same category as Trump, have the courage to come out and say so. And then, perhaps, you can explain how you conclude that, in light of my comments on the nature of the process.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*
>
> On Monday, June 30, 2025 at 07:41:56 PM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> Colleagues,
>
> I notice that the opponents of charter change are clear with what they stand against. It is their right to stand with the status quo and make its case. It is even their right to question the legitimacy of future elections in a way that, in my view, comes close to statements by our current president about certain elections being rigged.

Part of our role as leaders involves stating what each of us stands for. What will we, all of us on this list, do as leaders to try and address our structural deficit? Address the morale questions of town employees? Increase commercial development?

Putting aside the charter question for the moment, a process that will take years to unfold, what are we collectively committed to do as town leaders to solve the current problems faced by our town?

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 7:26 PM Jonathan Margolis <jjmargolis@yahoo.com> wrote:

> "any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable"
>
> Accountability inheres in the knowledge that one can be voted out. That's why lame duck politicians are enabled to be irresponsible--they cannot be voted out. Indeed, just today I saw a post on a political website, "Thom Tillis, Unleashed," noting that the Republican senator, who announced that he will not be running next year, is much more free than he had been. Members of a charter commission would not face re-election, so they would not be accountable to the voters.
>
> " it will be very important for voters to assess charter candidates...as to which candidates are open in their thinking and which candidates are resolved to enact certain predetermined outcomes. Candidates should be clear about whether or not they would propose more hearings and public conversation than the statute requires. Brookline voters will vote according to their preferences."
>
> Will voters take such a close look at individual candidates? I suggest that the likelihood of that would be much diminished by having the vote on whether there should be a commission at the same time as the vote for individual commission members. As I've noted in the past, that puts a big thumb on the scale in favor of having a commission, and in favor of candidates who have made up their mind that Brookline's current town-meeting system needs to go. That is why the process is undemocratic, and even anti-democratic.
>
> Jonathan J. Margolis, Pct. 7 and Library Trustee
> Brookline, MA 02446
> (617) 240-3205
> *Crede Cum Videris Pecuniam*

On Monday, June 30, 2025 at 03:22:48 PM EDT, Jonathan Joseph Golden via groups.io <jonathanjgolden=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:

> Colleagues,
>
> In addition to what Stanley has mentioned, any charter proposal would go before the voters for an up or down vote. That is what keeps commissioners accountable.

As for what the statute says or does not say, it will be very important for voters to assess charter candidates (should voters approve a charter process) as to which candidates are open in their thinking and which candidates are resolved to enact certain predetermined outcomes. Candidates should be clear about whether or not they would propose more hearings and public conversation than the statute requires. Brookline voters will vote according to their preferences.

Jonathan Golden TMM11

Jonathan Golden, PhD
Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting

On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 2:40 PM STANLEY SPIEGEL <sdspiegel@att.net> wrote:

No system of logic of which I am aware states that if Newton is underperforming Brookline regarding economic development, all cities would be likely underperform. That may or may not be true; I made no such statement or inference. I simply reported on what seems to be the case for Newton.

Additionally, the charter commission statute makes no mention of or requirement for "exploring options." The commissioners would be free to simply propose anything they wish to, the sole statutory requirement being that they hold a public hearing as part of their proceedings.

It's best not to rely on language that doesn't exist.

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

> On Jun 30, 2025, at 1:46 PM, Jonathan Golden <jonathanjgolden@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> Colleagues,
>
> I thank Stanley for helping to make this a clear choice. By this logic, if Newton is underperforming Brookline, then any form of city government would likely underperform town government. Why bother to explore any options?
>
> For those who support the charter process, there may be forms of government that could do better than our current form of government. All we ask is that we explore the options and either reaffirm what we have now or explore something different.
>
> Jonathan Golden TMM11
>
> **Jonathan Golden, PhD**
> **Founder, HeartStance Education Consulting**
>
> On Mon, Jun 30, 2025 at 12:54 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:
>
> > Andrew et al,
> >
> > Coincidences?? What coincidences?? I simply pointed out that existing data provides no basis for asserting that the city of Newton is any more successful at promoting economic development than is the town of Brookline. This conclusion follows empirically from the recent recorded experiences of Newton and Brookline, and has nothing to do with any manifestation of

randomness or coincidence. Perhaps city proponents can come up with other relevant examples that demonstrate the superiority of city governments in fostering economic development, but Newton seems not to be a case in point.

(Note: this response will not be sent to the TMMA unless a TMM elects to forward it.)

~ Stanley

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

> On Jun 30, 2025, at 11:18 AM, Andrew Fischer <andrewmfischer@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> Figures can be eye-opening without being “significant”.
>
> One can often find coincidences in data. Coincidences don’t establish correlation.
>
> One needs more than coincidence to draw conclusions.
>
> Andrew Fischer
> Town Meeting Member
> Precinct 13
> andrewmfischer@gmail.com
> 617-293-8304
>
> > On Jun 29, 2025, at 8:38 PM, Judith Vanderkay via groups.io <jvanderkay=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
> >
> > Stanley, these figures are eye-opening! Thank you so much.
> >
> > -- Judith Vanderkay, TMM #9 and Library Trustee
> >
> > On Sat, Jun 28, 2025 at 5:11 PM Stanley Spiegel via groups.io <sdspiegel=att.net@groups.io> wrote:
> > > Colleagues,
> > >
> > > We’ve recently heard much blather by supporters of changing Brookline from a town to a city, claiming that Newton’s city government is more receptive to commercial development than our town government. The pro-city majority that dominated the recent Moderator’s Committee on Forms of Government has embraced this view.
> > >
> > > It turns out that these anti-town advocates would have done well to acquaint themselves with more factual information before holding forth.
> > >
> > > The latest official statistics from the Commonwealth’s Municipal Data Bank show that Brookline’s commercial share of its tax base, while a

none-too-robust 9.22 percent, is actually higher than Newton's, which trails at a an even less impressive 8.08 percent.

Hence hard data does not support claims that Newton's city government is more efficient than Brookline's town government at green-lightning commercial development, and in fact it may well be less effective.

Moreover, US census data shows that Brookline had a 5.72% growth in residential housing units from 2010 to 2020, well ahead of Newton's 4.44% increase. So even regarding residential property, Newton's experience doesn't validate the notion that changing Brookline from a town to a city would encourage faster economic development, and actually suggests that the opposite might be true.

~ Stanley Spiegel

Sent from a mobile device.
Please excuse typos.

> On Jun 27, 2025, at 9:24 PM, Marty Rosenthal <martyros@world.std.com> wrote:
>
> [PS, before addressing the far below (abbreviated) string, I just must reiterate my Sat. June 21st 7:15 pm ("wa30 "debate"!, No-Kings-or-Mayors; facts vs Sound-Bites [re "No Action … ") diatribe's p4 criticism of **Jonathan Golden**. He yesterday 8:05 pm, yet again omitting that he's a City Charter Campaign leader, reiterated not once but *twice* (in three short paragraphs) what I criticized last Sat. – the pro-city B[aloney] sandwich of exaggerated-oversimplified-misrepresented talking point(s) about "*structural deficit, employee turnover, and lack of sufficient commercial development*." 'Nuff said by moi -- last Sat.]
>
> OK, to the BELOW string, yet more Dodge-Ball-Diversion, albeit likely not conscious/intentional. **Charlie H** is yet another of some very smart, sincere, & well-

intentioned "pro-housing" advocates, some of whom – maybe not he -- prioritize that not only over "affordability," but also over maintaining the character of our neighborhoods &/or honestly weighing ALL the true benefits/costs of either that or our FoG. I was disappointed in 2023 that he (like J. Golden) was among about 60 TMM's who failed to support (WA18) creating any study committee.

Of course his motives are (largely) irrelevant, except to the extent his/*everyone's* credibility is pertinent to weighing their/our opinions. In any event, in below saying **Chris M** (about Newton) was "*blaming this on city vs. town,"* Charlie makes three ascendingly crucial errors of at least omission and at worst willful blindness. ***First, least important***, & a nit-pick: I myself fail to see how Chris' message did that. To me, he merely offered (very pertinent) evidence that – unlike what our city-proponents allege (below), but now with *my phraseology* –cities' concentrated & unchecked/unbalanced powers, as well as campaigns financed by developers would be *Magic Development Wands* for Brookline, where density's very high, housing's very tight/pricey, and economic development's far harder than most cities, like Newton & Cambridge. (See "hope," far below)

Second, while the 4 pro-city MCFG members' final report for some (wrong!) reason focused solely on our T/M Legislative branch, it's actually the city advocates like **Rebecca and Neil W**who've often emphasized a central (Executive Branch) allegation: our lack of ("getting to yes") "**Leadership,**" especially as it allegedly impedes (yes, needed, at least carefully) DEVELOPMENT, e.g. denigrating our (Ps, great & appreciated!) S-Bd as "*The Kiddie Table.*" See re **NEWTON**, Prof. Berry, WA30 **App B-4,** pp 12-13 & 10(*emphases* added)**:**

> "In terms of economic development each of the two governments has dedicated offices to promote new commercial activity. But there is *a major difference* in structure beyond this. The negotiating that leads to *getting to yes* has a more direct (and more explicitly political) path *in Newton* than in Brookline. … Newton's political process for "*getting*

to yes" on its larger-scale projects is different than what we have in Brookline. *In terms of leadership the most significant difference is surely that Newton has a strong mayor system.* … Newton [h]as a *strong mayor/strong city council* system as the two branches of government are … *balanced in power* … . Mayor Fuller … has done well as *a consensus builder*and has mobilized strong support from the City Council on many projects. She is seen as *business friendly* … ."

[NB1, He mis-states – elsewhere (WA30 App B-4, p5) more explicitly – Newton's "*strong city council*'; in fact they have pathetically minimal BUDGET checks/balances power! **NB2,** speaking of "consensus builder," did she create and get passed a huge MBTA-CA "*Consensus Plan*" like our ("Kiddie Table**"**) **SBM Paul W**? And **NB3** see also Prof. Berry, even more unconvincingly, re CAMBRIDGE'S supposed development "Leadership," C/R 30/7-8, citing *South Boston's* House Speaker, Congressman John McCormick; yet another "Gimme a Break!")

***THIRD, & MOST IMPORTANT*:** Charlie's erroneous & otherwise minor nit-pick of Chris M, IMHO highlights a GIGANTIC – and still widely ignored – WA30 & C/C issue: Who's got & what is the **Charter Change BURDEN OF PROOF**? An un-educated gut-feeling? Mere preponderance of (alleged) evidence – like *Deflategate*? (See WA30 Whereas 6, then repeatedly, including App. A & **Gov. Dukakis'** Statement) In fact, CHRIS' email, again NOT "blaming [it] on city vs. town," DID offer an example of why Prof *Berry's alleged exemplar* of Newton's mayors does NOT prove a pro-city *Magic Development Wand.* That's all Chris suggested. It's the *pro-city folk who (falsely) allege "blame on"* town -- vs. city. And their case has been so far grossly – ludicrously -- UN-proven, e.g. by Chris' Riverside T station!

PS, while that's my main Homer-Mutty reaction, I do admit/concede -- as pro-city-ites obviously know/want but just as obviously will *never* admit out loud -- that (**A) DEVELOPERS' $$$$**will flood our Ballot Q's and our later elections' campaigns if we switch! (Earlier examples, like Bost-Newt, &

our 1988's $100k to end rentcontrol, not here repeated). **(B)** They'll therefore have inordinate (obscene) access to & influence on "our" councilors & mayors.
And **(C)** especially mayors have hugely/obscenely **Concentrated Powers** and lack of **Transparency.** All good?

BUT I'd (ala ML King) still**HOPE** (cf. BFranklin attchd) future/hypothetical Brookline mayors & city councilors would be unable to resist our (fabulously "civically engaed") "residents" desires to maintain our neihborhoods (& trees/grass), not to become Manhattan or Kenmore Sq.

Good w-e, all

Marty Rosenthal , TMM-9, frmr SBM, Strong City Skeptic
Co-Chair, Brookline PAX -- Neil Gordon (invaluable) other Co-Chair
www.BrooklinePAX.org, née 1962, predecessor to CPPAX;
~~617.742.0606~~ (often @ home office **617.738.6621** – **pls talk to machine, & if v/m full, call again or eml, sorry!**
[w, c/o Zalkind-etc., 65a Atlantic Ave, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02110; martinrosenthallaw.com/attorney-profile/ listed, www.bestlawyers.com/ & Martindale AV Preeminent [www.martindale.com/ratings-and-reviews/]
"*Some defeats are more triumphant than victories*." Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592);
"*1st they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.*" attrib'd to Gandhi; maybe Nicholas Klein, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Amer. (1918)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

EARLIER MESSAGE(S) (emphases now added by MRR)

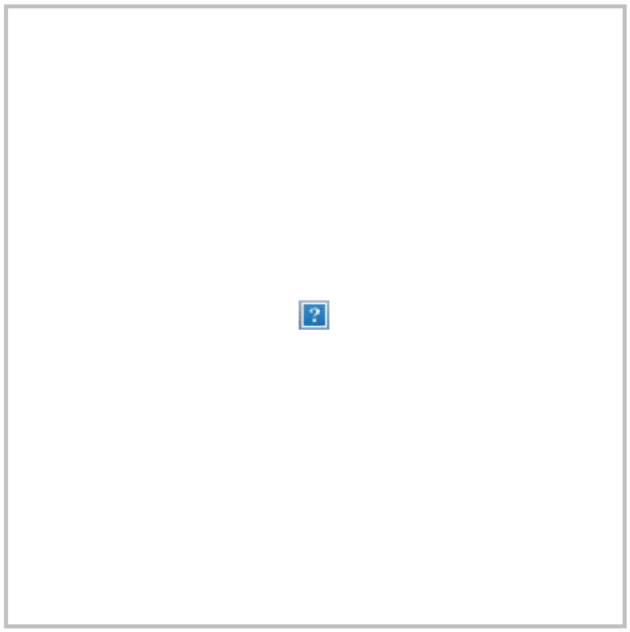
From: brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> **On Behalf Of** Charles Homer via groups.io
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 8:33 PM
To: muttychristopher@gmail.com
Cc: sgadsby@foleyhoag.com; anthony.flint@gmail.com; John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

I think blaming this on city vs. town is not terribly informative. Clearly the dramatic change in the commercial market--the bust in the lab space and office space

markets, together with the rise in interest rates--has a lot to do with the most recent challenge. The typical NIMBYism--which neither cities nor towns have a lock on--also plays a role (remember the suit from the nearby golf course) in slowing this down. I would view this more as an indictment of the general difficulty common to blue states--NY, CA, MA--in getting things built, especially but not only housing. It also suggests that mixed commercial and housing development is the most likely path to success at this time, without artificially increasing the proportion of commercial development beyond what the market will bear in pursuit of the desired tax benefit.

Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8

> On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 7:20 PM Christopher Mutty via groups.io<muttychristopher=gmail.com@groups.io> wrote:
>
> I often hear that a benefit of becoming a city is the economic development that will follow from a streamlined government. Take a look at the Riverside station site in Newton which has been under development since 2009. See below for a column from the Charles River Chamber newsletter today.
>
> Christopher Mutty
> TMM P9
>
> **A new — hopefully final — plan for Riverside T station**



Scholars estimate that it took 26 years to build the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

Construction of Boston's Big Dig took 16 years.

The number of years it takes to do something useful with the eyesore of asphalt at the Riverside MBTA station might land somewhere in between.

In September, developer Robert Korff of Mark Development will return to the Newton City Council to seek approval for a project that's been in the works in various forms since 2009 and has been before the council multiple times since 2011.

The 2025 version calls for 750 housing units, along with a new parking garage for its new residents and Green Line riders, as well as 20,000 SF of retail space.

That's an increase from 545 units in a 2024 plan, or 663-units in a 2018 plan, or a 290-unit version approved back in 2013 by a different developer (RH Normandy), which did not include the former Hotel Indigo property.

Those early proposals never penciled in, mainly because the economy shifted as the city took too long to approve each version and demanded too many concessions. There were legal

challenges too. And at one point a months-long, momentum-killing, vision planning session.

The new plan eliminates all previously proposed lab and office space. As we've seen with Bulfinch Co's Muzi Ford and Northland's Needham Streetsites, demand for lab and office space has declined to make these large projects feasible.

Still, this has be one of — if not the very best — developable sites for transit-oriented housing anywhere in eastern Massachusetts. And Korff's 750-unit plan goes a long way towards helping address our region's chronic housing shortage by providing homes for 750 folks and their families.

Without the labs and office, the revised Riverside plan is expected to generate less traffic — which should make neighbors happy — and allows for a reduction in parking and the removal of the direct I-95 access ramp,

Look for public hearings after Labor Day, with the goal of securing approvals before the end of the year.

Then let the building, finally, begin.

On Tue, Jun 24, 2025 at 11:47 AM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Anthony et al:

The Globe has now substituted online my corrected version for the flawed one that was published yesterday.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of Anthony Flint via groups.io<anthony.flint=gmail.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Gadsby, Sandy <SGadsby@foleyhoag.com>

Cc: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>; Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: Re: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Here's the link to the op-ed:

https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/06/23/opinion/brookline-town-meeting-city/

It might give even a city advocate a little pause, the sure sign of a persuasive argument.

It's actually quite an accomplishment to get an essay published in the Globe. So congrats Sandy..

Anthony Flint
Town Meeting Member Precinct 5
Vice President High Street Hill Association
617-930-1044
Senior Fellow | Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Host | Land Matters podcast
Correspondent | Bloomberg CityLab | The Boston Globe
@anthonyflint

On Mon, Jun 23, 2025 at 4:06 PM Sandy Gadsby via groups.io<sgadsby=foleyhoag.com@groups.io> wrote:

Dear TMMs:

The Globe managed to screw up my OpEd piece that John mentions and that was published today, so that some of it does not make much sense. Here is the corrected version.

Regards, Sandy Gadsby

From:brooklinetmma@groups.io<brooklinetmma@groups.io> on behalf of John Bassett

via groups.io<baswolfe=aol.com@groups.io>
Sent: Monday, June 23, 2025 2:27 PM
To: John Bassett <baswolfe@aol.com>; letters Globe <letter@globe.com>; TMMA <brooklinetmma@groups.io>
Cc: Brookline Pax <brooklinepax@groups.io>
Subject: [brooklinetmma] Should Brookline become a city?

Should Brookline become a city? No! Not now. At some point Brookline may be too big to be a Town. But we are not there yet. The proponents of becoming a city start their argument with the false statement ..."it (Brookline) is governed by Town Meeting." Only much later do they acknowledge the existence of the Select Board and the Town Administrator. As Sandy Gadsby makes clear in his good rebuttal we are governed by a Select Board and a Town Administrator. Town Meeting has no administrative function. It must pass the budget. It votes on bylaws, including zoning. It accepts citizens petitions, it votes on Resolutions. Town Meeting advantages outweigh inefficiencies. I've been an elected Town Meeting Member for a long time. People know me. They email and call me. All our votes are recorded and published on the Town website. We are transparent. I lived in Cambridge and Boston before Brookline. Those cities then were less responsive and transparent

than Brookline is now. Town Meeting is a pool of informed volunteers with expertise that enrich our many appointed committees. Not only were Cambridge and Boston unresponsive then, they were inefficient by making decisions without adequate public input that were sometimes bad and needed correction. The discussion of our Charter may be productive. We are not perfect and could be better. But Representative Town Meeting has served us well. We have good services. And most of our races for Town Meeting are contested. There's interest. We are OK. We should, at least for now stay with our Representative Town Meeting.

John Bassett
26 Searle Ave.
Brookline, MA 02445
617 543 7747

--
Charlie Homer
TMM Pct 8
Chair, Advisory Council on Public Health

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of Harry Friedman via groups.io <spinmarty=yahoo.com@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] 7/16 Postmortem w the Moderator/
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 10:02:05 PM

The Annual Meeting of the TMMA, and the Postmortem with the Moderator of the Last Town Meeting, will take place on Wednesday, July 16, starting at 7 p.m.

This meeting will be in person. It will take place in room [TBD] of Town Hall.

TMMA ANNUAL MEETING/ELECTION

This will be the first order of business.

First--Election of the TMMA executive officers. **In order to run for one of the five offices, you need to register your interest with the Nominations Committee prior to Sunday, July 13.** See below for details.

Second--Election of Precinct Representatives to the Board. Members of each precinct will divide into groups, and elect up to two representatives and an alternate from each precinct. See below for details.

POSTMORTEM WITH THE MODERATOR

The next order of business. For those new to Town Meeting, this is a chance to praise, criticise, critique, and otherwise comment on how the Spring Town Meeting was handled. You question or comment; the Moderator answers.

Details on the Election Process:

The TMMA Annual Meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 16, at 7 p.m. Note the operative dates: Notice to the Nominations Committee prior to 7/13 to run for an officer's position, and 7/16 when the meeting will take place.

What's happening? The TMMA has an annual meeting once a year. Hence the name "annual meeting." We use it to hold elections for the executive officers (president, vice president, treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary), as well as for precinct representatives to the TMMA Board.

If you are interested in running for one of the executive offices, please let the Nominations Committee, i.e. Neil Gordon, know before Sunday, July 13. You can e-mail him at neil@nrgordon.com You need not notify anyone in advance if you just want to run for precinct representative.

Frequently Asked Questions

How Does This Work? If you want to run for an officer's position, contact the Nominations Committee, i.e. Neil Gordon, and tell him you wish to run. You will be

placed on the ballot at the Annual Meeting. If you choose not to contact the Nominations Committee, but prior to the start of the elections you present a petition to the Recording Secretary, Bruce Levin, signed by 5 or more town meeting members, plus the candidate, you can also get on the ballot.

What if No One Contacts the Nominations Committee or Presents a Petition? Then, nominations may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting. Otherwise, no floor nominations are allowed.

Are You Making this Stuff Up? No, it's in the bylaws.

Do I Have to Go Through All of This Just to Be a Precinct Representative? No. Precinct representatives (2 from each precinct plus an alternate, if there is interest in the alternate position) will be nominated and elected at the Annual Meeting. Only TMMs from the same precinct vote for their precinct representative.

What If I Want to Be a Precinct Rep. But Cannot Make the Annual Meeting? Let Corresponding Secretary Harry Friedman know, and he will see that you are nominated when your precinct meets together at the Annual Meeting.

What Are the Duties of Each of the Officers? From the bylaws:

President--The President oversees the activities of the organisation, presides over meetings, has the authority to sign cheques, and has duties as designated by the members of the Executive Board.

Vice President--The Vice President serves as President if the President is unavailable. The Vice President assists the President and represents the President as needed.

Treasurer--The Treasurer directs the financial affairs of the organization subject to the orders of the Executive Board including, but not limited to, collecting all moneys due, signing cheques and managing bank accounts, and disbursing funds within approved budgets. The Treasurer submits an annual financial report and monthly financial reports to the Executive Board and submits financial reports as requested by the Executive Board.

Recording Secretary--The Recording Secretary attends all regular meetings and all Executive Board meetings, and makes a record of the proceedings.

Corresponding Secretary--The Corresponding Secretary answers mail, arranges meeting sites, manages the Executive Board membership list, and sends notices.

What exactly does the TMMA do? A good question. We sponsor the listserv, and we run educational programmes. Past programmes include *How to Write a Warrant Article*, as well as sponsoring warrant reviews.

Here's the catch. Someone has to be willing to actually do this stuff. We don't have

staff to do this. The officers and members of the Board need to actually do it, or find others willing to help.

Hope to see you on the 16th.

Harry Friedman
TMMA Corresponding Secretary
TMM Precinct 12

Virus-free.www.avast.com

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From: brooklinetmma@groups.io on behalf of C. Scott Ananian via groups.io <brookline=cscott.net@groups.io>
To: Brookline TM
Subject: [brooklinetmma] ICE activity in Brookline
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 10:32:03 PM

At tonight's meeting of the Police Commissioners' Advisory Committee we learned that in the past month we had our first two ICE actions in Brookline. One was at the county courthouse (on Washington St across from Town Hall), someone who was in county custody not BPD custody. Little information is known.

The other was a non-Brookline resident arrested for a non-civil traffic violation: repeated driving on a suspended license. ICE contacted BPD after BPD fingerprinted the individual, because fingerprints are submitted to a national federal database monitored by ICE. ICE was informed that, according to our Sanctuary policy, Brookline would not hold the person on the federal detainer and that they would be bailed out and release. In response, ICE arrived at the police station. After ICE approached the station front desk they were asked to wait outside. The person was bailed and released and ICE took them into custody immediately outside BPD.

This is all according to current BPD policy: Brookline police policy general order 3.1 Procedures J: "The person arrested shall... procedures to include fingerprinting and photographing". Policy on Federal Immigration Enforcement, general order 43.0 clause 3, "except incidental use, such as fingerprints, that may be acquired by Immigration and Customs Enforcement". Brookline bylaw is article 8.30 is somewhat related as well, in establishing other activities that result in fingerprints being transmitted to ICE. Fingerprinting of teachers was also part of Chapter 459 of the Acts of 2012, "An Act relative to Background Checks".
-- C. Scott Ananian, TMM 10 & PCAC

(http://cscott.net/)

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