

BROOKLINE COMMUNITY AGING NETWORK
Livable Community Advocacy Committee LCAC
April 5, 2021
Notes

Attending: Matt Weiss (Zoom Host), Susan Granoff, (Chair), Paula Friedman (Presenter), Susan Roberts (Presenter), David Lescohier (Presenter), Elaine Bakal, Roger Blood, Susan Cohen, Lou Crimmins, Roz Feldberg, Marion Freedman-Gurspan, John Harris, Lydia Kaufman, Yolanda Rodriguez, John Seay, Carol Seibert (note-taker), Ruthann Sneider, Diana Lees Spiegel, Stanley Spiegel, David Trevvett, Melissa Trevvett, Henry Winkelman

Presentation on Proposed Warrant Articles 14-17 on Short-Term Rentals (STR's) and Contingent Article 14

Guest Speaker: Paula Friedman, Chair, Moderator's Committee on Short-Term Rentals and TMM, Pct. 14.

History: A Moderator's Committee (MC) was appointed to consider changes to an earlier 2020 proposal on Short-Term Rentals. The MC has proposed three Warrant Articles: WA 14, which adds short-term rentals (STR's) as a permissible new use in Brookline's zoning bylaws; WA 15, which details specific regulations and operating procedures for STR's; and WA 16, which covers how the regulations and procedures of WA 15 will be enforced. WA 17 has been introduced by petitioners who oppose some of the provisions of WA 15.

Finally, a Contingent Article 14 has been presented. STR's are not currently a defined use in Brookline zoning bylaws. At present, the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Building Commissioner treat them as prohibited. A pending lawsuit challenges that determination. Contingent Article 14 would amend the zoning bylaw to make explicit the prohibition of STR's in Brookline.

Guest Speaker: Susan Roberts, Co-Petitioner WA 17, TMM, Pct 2
Proponents of WA 17 have concerns about potential financial deprivation that could be experienced by STR hosts as a result of the proposed regulations and that there may be a misperception of potential harm from STR operations. WA 17 offers a number of alternative regulations that differ from those in WA 15.

Questions on WA's 14-17 included discussion of insurance liability, implementation timeline, and concerns that STR's might replace other desirable types of housing in our community. Anyone with questions or concerns may contact Paula Friedman and Susan Roberts. We can discuss whether LCAC wishes to take a position on these articles at the next LCAC meeting.

Presentation on Community Preservation Act (CPA), May 4 Ballot Question

#2. Guest Speaker: David Lescohier, TMM, Pct 11

Question #2 seeks voter approval of the Community Preservation Act, a fixed 1% surcharge on property taxes which would fund expenditures for historic preservation, parks and recreation, open space, and community ("affordable") housing. The Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund matches revenues from the Town's tax surcharge (for FY 2022, at the rate of an additional 30%.) It would be the prerogative of the Town to determine how to allocate CPA funds among these priorities. For example, the surcharge on an \$8,000 property tax bill would be \$80. Exemptions would be authorized for low income residents and for low and moderate income seniors.

The Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund was established in 2000, and the Community Preservation Act has been passed in 186 communities in the Commonwealth. A nine member Administrative Committee representing multiple Town Boards and Committees as well as several Select Board appointees would administer the program with the assistance of a full-time planner and a half-time support person. For 2022, the projected \$2.6 million raised by the property tax surcharge would be matched by the State at 30% bringing Brookline's fund up to about \$3 million. Even more, adopting the CPA would make the Town eligible to receive annual distributions from the statewide CP Trust, monies only available to communities that have adopted the Act. Other communities have also found that they are able to leverage CPA monies to receive additional funding from State, Federal, and private sources. Brookline currently pays into the State CP Trust Fund through recording fees paid to Norfolk County. In 2020, Brookline property taxpayers paid over \$478,000 which went to fund CPA projects in other communities. In November, 2020, Town Meeting voted overwhelmingly to place Question #2 on the ballot. Discussion centered on the number of property tax increases Brookline filers must expect to face in the future. There was advocacy for the Brookline Housing Advisory Board having a seat on the administering committee.

LCAC voted to support passage of the CPA Ballot Question.

Update on BrooklineCAN's April 27 Town Candidate Forum, 3 pm

There are 3 town-wide contested races, 5 candidates for Select Board, 2 candidates for a one-year term on the School Committee, and 2 candidates for Town Moderator. Special attention will be given to concerns of older residents. Michael Allen of the Council on Aging staff will serve as moderator. If you have questions for the candidates, please contact Michael Allen in advance: mallen@brooklinema.gov, 617-730-2754. The BCAN newsletter has a Zoom link. The Forum can be seen live on BIG and will be recorded.

Update on Proposal to Eliminate the Council on Aging as an Independent Department

Raul Fernandez, Chair of the Task Force to Reimagine Policing in Brookline, has reportedly informed the Select Board that he has withdrawn this proposal.

Update on Advisory Committee's Action on Council on Aging FY22 Budget Request

The Advisory Committee has indicated they feel the Council on Aging needs more budgetary support and have approved restoring the FY22 budget to its pre-COVID level and added funding for hiring an additional part-time social worker and making the current part-time custodial position full-time.

Discussion on Warrant Articles LCAC might take a position on at the May Town Meeting

Discussion included warrant articles concerned with the Fisher Hill site, speeding signs, outdoor dining, Col. Floyd public housing, and BIG funding. Other suggestions were to lobby for automatic representation from the senior community on a number of Town committees that will result from 2021 Warrant Articles, and advocacy for modest-income senior exemptions from some property tax-raising proposals. For the next LCAC meeting, Susan Granoff will invite petitioners on the Col. Floyd and Fisher Hill articles to present.

Next Meeting: 3-4:30 pm on Monday, May 10, on Zoom.

Interested members should contact Carol Seibert (Cpseibert@gmail.com) to request copies of slides presented at the meeting.