

Citizen Engagement Corner

## TOWN MEETING – WHAT’S UP?

League of Women Voters of Brookline

Most Brookline residents are not fully aware of the issues that come before our Spring and Fall Town Meetings. On November 13, Town Meeting Members will vote on a variety of items, including but not limited to the following:

1) *Articles 3 & 4*: Appropriating additional funds to various accounts in the fiscal year 2019 budget or transferring funds between said accounts. Additional state aid allows an increase of \$509,398 to be appropriated, shared 50/50 between Town and Schools. (Select Board unanimously recommends Favorable Action by a vote of 5-0 taken October 23, 2018; Advisory Committee voted 22-0-0 Favorable Action.) Proposed appropriations for school renovation and expansion are postponed to a re-convened Special Town Meeting Dec. 13, 2018.

2) *Article 17*: Amending the General by-laws to prohibit the Select Board from entering into or authorizing nondisclosure agreements, except with respect to agreements protecting the identity of the claimant from disclosure, in connection with claims of discrimination, retaliation, and harassment against the Town, and to require the Town to publicize the amounts paid to defend and settle those claims (Select Board voted 4-1 No Action; Advisory Committee recommended No Action 17 - 2 - 2).

3) *Article 20*: Amendment to require a developer of housing (other than 40B affordable housing) to reduce floor area in order to take advantage of the “Transit Parking Overlay District” (“TPOD”) that allows off-street parking space requirements to be lower than in other zoning districts. (Select Board voted No Action unanimously; Advisory Committee recommended referral of the subject matter of Article 20 to the Zoning By-Law Review Committee 12-8-0.)

4) *Article 21*: Resolution submitted by Girl Scout Troop 62558 for the Town to encourage local businesses to donate unopened/unused commercial items to local charities rather than dumping such items in waste disposal programs. (Select Board

unanimously voted Favorable Action on the motion offered by the unanimous Advisory Committee.)

5) *Article 22*: Resolution asking the Town to urge the state legislature to pass legislation for tax relief by reinstating the effect of state and local tax deductions for federal income tax filings. Deductions were limited to \$10,000/year by the December 2017 federal tax legislation. (Select Board unanimously voted Favorable Action on a slightly changed version calling for legislation that enables the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as well as its cities and towns, to mitigate the effect on taxpayers of federal limits on state and local tax deductions. By a vote of 15–2–3, the Advisory Committee recommended No Action.)

6) *Article 23*: Resolution asking the Town Administrator to study the feasibility of restoring the former Beacon Street Bridle Path for non-motorized, low-impact travel. (Select Board voted Favorable Action unanimously on a revision requesting the Town Administrator to have staff develop a Scope of Services in time for inclusion in the Town's FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). By a vote of 20–1–0, the Advisory Committee recommends Favorable Action on the motion offered by the Select Board.)

*Town Meeting within a Town Meeting* – Proposed change to Town's Zoning By-law on density requirements for Social Consumption Marijuana Retailers issued a primary use license and Storefront Marijuana Retailers. The change would make the 200-foot minimum space between all marijuana establishments applicable regardless of what floor the establishment is located on. This approach is consistent with the town's goal to minimize concentration and to distribute marijuana retailers broadly throughout the town. (Select Board voted 3-2 in favor; Advisory Committee 14-4-0.)

*Prepared and submitted by a member of the League of Women Voters of Brookline (LWVB). The League is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy.*