

Matt Hyatt - Chair
Andrea Brue - Clerk
Blair Hines
Linda K. Hamlin
Steven A. Heikin
Thomas Renkes
Mark J. Zarrillo



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Or call: [646-828-7666](tel:646-828-7666)

Meeting ID: 160 362 8113

Planning Board Agenda
REVISED
Chapter 40A Cases Evening Hearing
Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 7:30 PM

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Hearing.

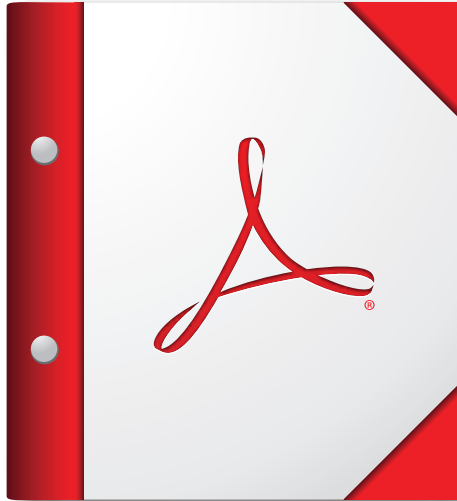
- 1. Public Comment on Matters Not on the Agenda**
- 2. Site Plan and Design Review**
 - 2a. **31 Harvard Street** – Addition of a 4th floor to add one dwelling unit in this mixed use building Pct.6 **Hearing Materials at** www.brooklinema.gov/4090
- 3. Potential Zoning Amendment for Fall '26 Own Meeting 26 Pleasant Street**
 - 3a. The proposed overlay zoning for this parking lot would allow the development of multifamily housing up to seven stories and a maximum FAR of 4.0, through the Special Permit process, including Planning Board design review and Zoning Board of Appeals approval. Pct.
- 4. Presentation And Discussion of Allowing the Planning Board to be the Special Permit Granting Authority (Spga) for Alterations and Additions to Single- and two-Family Dwellings, Except for Full Demolition of Principal Buildings or When Variances are Required**
 - 4a. The Department of Planning and Community Development and the Building Department propose streamlining the review and approval process for special permit applications for alterations and additions to single- and two-family dwellings. The purpose of the meeting is for PB Members to comment on this potential change to the Zoning By-Law.
- 5. Anr Plan for 43 Fairgreen Place**
 - 5a. 43 Fairgreen Pl, Chestnut Hill, MA - SUBDIVISION PLAN & CONSOLIDATION PLAN - STAMPED

**6. Appointment of Additional Brookline Avenue Dat Member - Park and Recreation
Commissioner Michael O'connor**

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EXCEPTIONS FROM COVERAGE (SURVEY RELATED ONLY) SCHEDULE B, PART II, LISTED IN TITLE COMMITMENT NO. BOS-20230860-MA ISSUED BY COMMONWEALTH LAND TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY HAVING AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF NOVEMBER 30, 2023.

- 6 NOTICE OF VARIANCE BY THE BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE TOWN OF BROOKLINE DATED OCTOBER 17, 1960, AND RECORDED IN BOOK 3853, PAGE 349.
- (NOT PLOTTABLE)
- 7 NOTICE OF DECISION BY THE BOARD OF APPEALS OF THE TOWN OF BROOKLINE DATED MARCH 23, 1984, AND RECORDED IN BOOK 6384, PAGE 19.
- (NOT PLOTTABLE)
- 8 TAKING FOR THE ALTERATION, RELOCATION AND WIDENING OF JOHN STREET FROM PLEASANT STREET TO GREEN STREET AND THE TAKING OF AN EASEMENT FOR SUCH PURPOSES BY THE TOWN OF BROOKLINE RECORDED IN BOOK 4347, PAGE 248 AND SHOWN ON PLAN RECORDED IN PLAN BOOK 220, PAGE 439.
- (AS SHOWN HEREON)

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION PER COMMITMENT NO. BOS-20230860-MA ISSUED BY COMMONWEALTH LAND TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY HAVING AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF NOVEMBER 30, 2023.

THAT CERTAIN PARCEL OF LAND SITUATED ON PLEASANT STREET IN BROOKLINE, NORFOLK COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS AND SHOWN AS LOT 2 ON PLAN ENTITLED, "SUBDIVISION PLAN OF LAND BROOKLINE, MASS." DATED DEC. 22, 1983, JOHN F. HENNESSY, C. E. RECORDED WITH SAID DEED AS PLAN NO. 483 OF 1984 IN BOOK 6389, PAGE 463.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (PER SURVEY)

A CERTAIN PARCEL OF LAND SITUATED IN THE TOWN OF BROOKLINE, COUNTY OF NORFOLK AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT A POINT OF TANGENCY FORMING THE INTERSECTION OF THE NORTHWESTERLY SIDELINE OF PLEASANT STREET AND THE NORTHEASTERLY SIDELINE OF JOHN STREET, THENCE;

RUNNING N 38°04'10" W, BY SAID JOHN STREET, A DISTANCE OF 92.00 FEET TO A POINT;

THENCE TURNING AND RUNNING N 51°55'50" E, BY LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF JOHN STREET TRUST, A DISTANCE OF 90.00 FEET TO A POINT;

THENCE TURNING AND RUNNING N 38°03'58" E, BY LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF JOHN STREET TRUST, A DISTANCE OF 55.24 FEET TO A POINT;

THENCE TURNING AND RUNNING N 56°06'05" E, BY LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF THE GS REALTY TRUST, A DISTANCE OF 89.72 FEET TO A POINT;

THENCE TURNING AND RUNNING S 37°39'03" E, BY LAND NOW OR FORMERLY OF BROOKLINE HOUSING AUTHORITY, A DISTANCE OF 167.39 FEET TO A POINT ON SAID PLEASANT STREET;

THENCE TURNING AND RUNNING S 52°33'02" W, BY SAID PLEASANT STREET, A DISTANCE OF 153.54 FEET TO A POINT OF CURVATURE;

THENCE RUNNING BY THE INTERSECTION OF SAID PLEASANT STREET AND SAID JOHN STREET, ALONG A CURVE TO THE RIGHT, HAVING A RADIUS OF 25.00 FEET, A DELTA ANGLE OF 89°22'53" AND AN ARC LENGTH OF 39.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

SAID PARCEL CONTAINING 25,545 SQUARE FEET.

LIST OF POTENTIAL ENCROACHMENTS

JOHN STREET

CONCRETE WALKWAY OVER 0.5'

NOW OR FORMERLY JOHN STREET TRUST

STOCKADE FENCE OVER 0.8'
STOCKADE FENCE OVER 0.3'

NOW OR FORMERLY THE GS REALTY TRUST

UTILITY POLE ON LINE
GRAVEL CROSSES PROPERTY LINE

NOW OR FORMERLY BROOKLINE HOUSING AUTHORITY

CHAIN LINK FENCE OVER 0.2'

PLEASANT STREET

CONCRETE WALKWAY OVER 0.2' - 0.4'

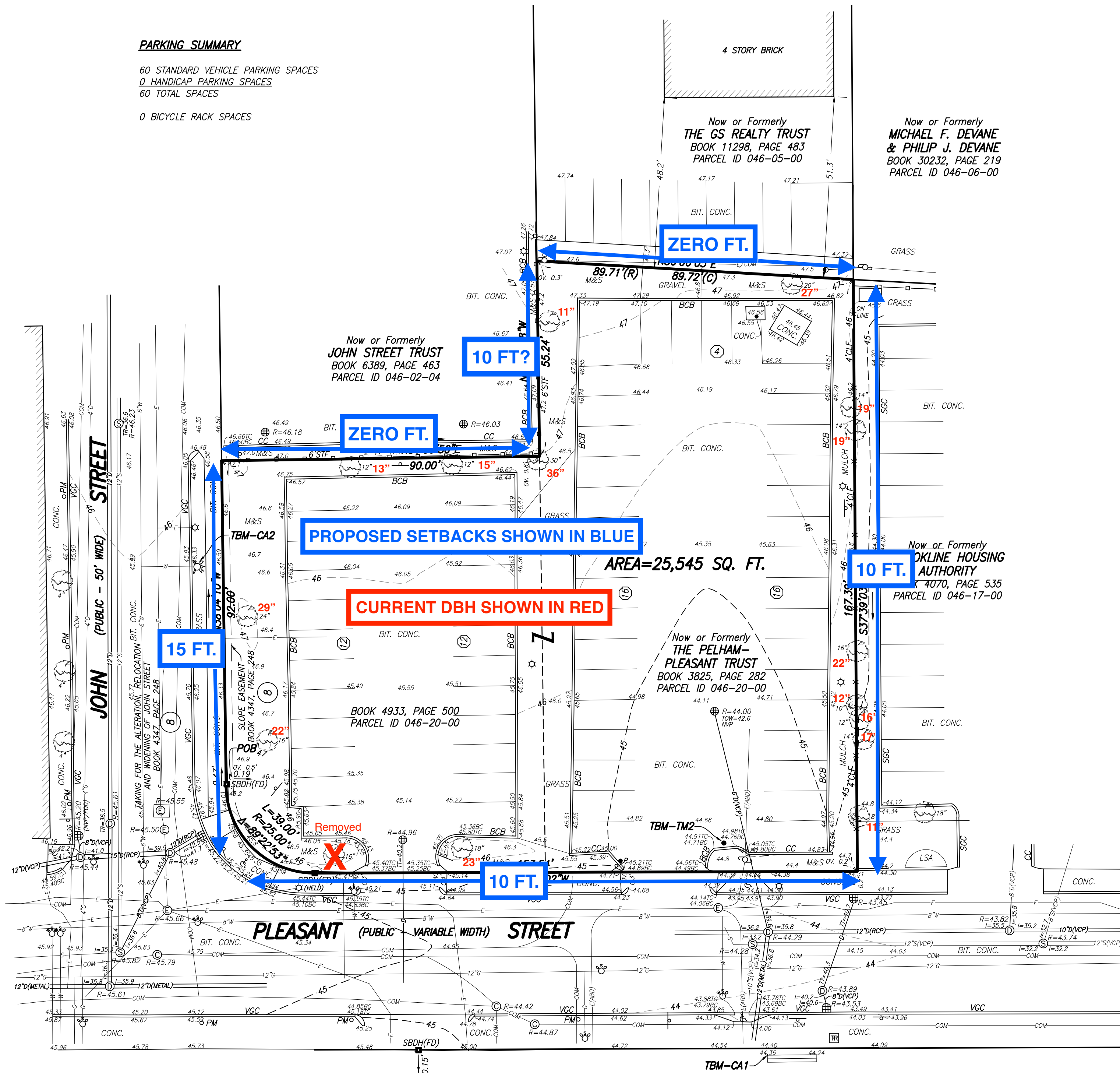
PARKING SUMMARY

60 STANDARD VEHICLE PARKING SPACES

0 HANDICAP PARKING SPACES

60 TOTAL SPACES

0 BICYCLE RACK SPACES



NOTES:

- BENCH MARK INFORMATION:
BENCH MARK USED:
TBM-TM2: MAG NAIL SET AT EDGE OF PARKING LOT, 110'± SOUTHERLY FROM THE FRONT LEFT CORNER OF BUILDING AT #50 PLEASANT STREET AND 7.7'± FROM THE BACK OF SIDEWALK ON THE WEST SIDE OF PLEASANT STREET, AS SHOWN HEREON. ELEVATION = 44.75 (FELDMAN PROJECT ID: 2100226)
TEMPORARY BENCH MARKS SET:
TBM-CA1: BOTTOM RIGHT CORNER OF CONCRETE STEP IN FRONT OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF BROOKLINE AT 31 PLEASANT STREET, AS SHOWN HEREON. ELEVATION = 44.92
TBM-CA2: FRONT LEFT BOLT ON HYDRANT ALONG THE NORTHERLY SIDELINE OF JOHN STREET, APPROXIMATELY 61 FEET NORTHWEST OF THE INTERSECTION WITH PLEASANT STREET, AS SHOWN HEREON. ELEVATION = 48.40
- ELEVATIONS REFER TO THE NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988 (NAVD88).
- CONTOUR INTERVAL EQUALS ONE (1) FOOT.
- THE PROPERTY SHOWN HEREON IS THE SAME PROPERTY DESCRIBED IN TITLE COMMITMENT NUMBER BOS-20230860-MA ISSUED BY COMMONWEALTH LAND TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY HAVING AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF NOVEMBER 30, 2023.
- THE SUBJECT PROPERTY HAS DIRECT ACCESS TO PLEASANT STREET AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO JOHN STREET, BOTH PUBLIC WAYS.
- BY GRAPHIC PLOTTING ONLY, THE PARCEL SHOWN HEREON LIES WITHIN A ZONE "X" (UNSHADED), AN AREA OUTSIDE OF THE 0.2% ANNUAL CHANCE FLOOD, AS SHOWN ON THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (F.E.M.A) FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP (F.I.R.M.) FOR NORFOLK COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS, MAP NUMBERS 2502100051E AND 2502100053E, BOTH HAVING AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JULY 17, 2012.
- ZONING INFORMATION AS SHOWN HEREON WAS NOT PROVIDED BY THE TITLE INSURER AS REQUIRED BY ITEM 6 (A OR B) OF TABLE "A" IN THE 2021 ALTA SURVEY REQUIREMENTS.
- NO BUILDINGS WERE OBSERVED ON THE SUBJECT PROPERTY AT THE TIME OF SURVEY.
- NO EVIDENCE OF RECENT EARTH MOVING WORK, BUILDING CONSTRUCTION, OR BUILDING ADDITIONS WAS OBSERVED AT THE TIME OF SURVEY.
- TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THERE ARE NO PROPOSED CHANGES IN STREET RIGHT OF WAY LINES, NO EVIDENCE OF STREET OR SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION OR REPAIRS WERE OBSERVED AT THE TIME OF SURVEY.
- UTILITY INFORMATION SHOWN IS BASED ON BOTH A FIELD SURVEY AND PLANS OF RECORD. THE LOCATIONS OF UNDERGROUND PIPES AND CONDUITS HAVE BEEN DETERMINED FROM THE AFOREMENTIONED RECORD PLANS AND ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY. WE CANNOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGES INCURRED AS A RESULT OF UTILITIES THAT ARE OMITTED OR INACCURATELY SHOWN ON SAID RECORD PLANS, SINCE SUBSURFACE UTILITIES CANNOT BE VISIBLY VERIFIED. BEFORE PLANNING FUTURE CONNECTIONS, THE PROPER UTILITY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE CONSULTED AND THE ACTUAL LOCATION OF SUBSURFACE STRUCTURES SHOULD BE DETERMINED IN THE FIELD. CALL, TOLL FREE, THE DIG SAFE CALL CENTER AT 1-888-344-7233 SEVENTY-TWO HOURS PRIOR TO EXCAVATION.
- THIS DOCUMENT IS AN INSTRUMENT OF SERVICE OF FELDMAN GEOSPATIAL ISSUED TO OUR CLIENT FOR PURPOSES RELATED DIRECTLY AND SOLELY TO FELDMAN GEOSPATIAL'S SCOPE OF SERVICES UNDER CONTRACT TO OUR CLIENT FOR THIS PROJECT. ANY USE OR REUSE OF THIS DOCUMENT FOR ANY REASON BY ANY PARTY FOR PURPOSES UNRELATED DIRECTLY AND SOLELY TO SAID CONTRACT SHALL BE AT THE USER'S SOLE AND EXCLUSIVE RISK AND LIABILITY, INCLUDING LIABILITY FOR VIOLATION OF COPYRIGHT LAWS, UNLESS WRITTEN CONSENT IS PROVIDED BY FELDMAN GEOSPATIAL.

LEGEND

- SEWER MANHOLE
- DRAIN MANHOLE
- ELECTRIC MANHOLE
- COMMUNICATIONS MANHOLE
- HYDRANT
- WATER SHUT OFF/WATER GATE
- GAS SHUT OFF/GAS GATE
- CATCH BASIN
- ROUND CATCH BASIN
- D-FRAME CATCH BASIN
- GUY WIRE
- UTILITY POLE
- LIGHT POLE
- POST
- SIGN
- PM PARKING METER
- BOUND FOUND
- TRASH RECEPTACLE
- CURB RETURN
- NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES
- DECIDUOUS TREE
- CONIFEROUS TREE
- EXCEPTION NUMBER LISTED IN TITLE COMMITMENT
- HANDICAP RAMP

LEGEND

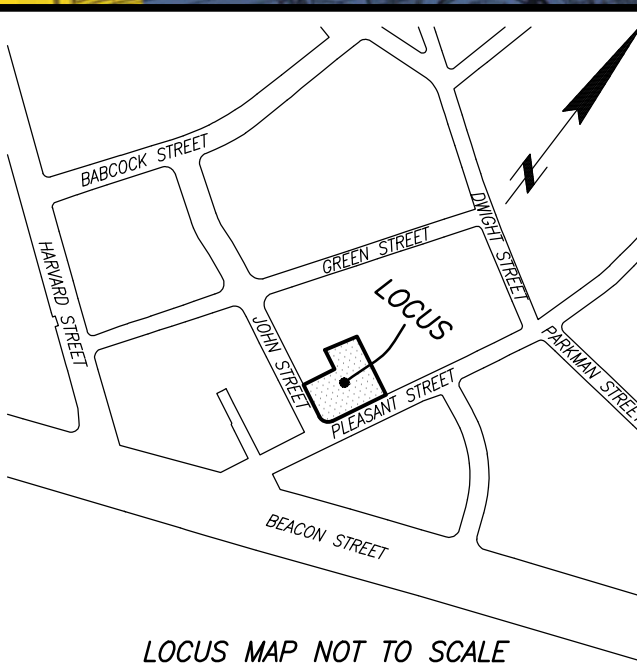
- BC BOTTOM OF CURB
- BCB BIT. CONC. BERM
- BIT. BITUMINOUS
- BK BACK
- (C) CALCULATED
- CC CONCRETE CURB
- CCB CAPE COD BERM
- CLF CHAIN LINK FENCE
- CONC. CONCRETE
- Δ DELTA ANGLE
- DH DRILL HOLE
- FD FOUND
- FGC FLUSH GRANITE CURB
- FOW FULL OF WATER
- I= INVERT ELEVATION
- INACC. INACCESSIBLE
- L= ARC LENGTH
- M&S MULCH & SHRUBS
- NTS NOT TO SCALE
- NVP NO VISIBLE PIPES
- OV OVER
- POB POINT OF BEGINNING
- R= RADIUS OR RIM ELEVATION
- (R) RECORD
- (REC) RECORD
- SB STONE BOUND
- SGC SLOPED GRANITE CURB
- SQ. FT. SQUARE FEET
- STF STOCKADE FENCE
- TBM TEMPORARY BENCH MARK
- TC TOP OF CURB
- TOD TOP OF DEBRIS
- TOW TOP OF WATER
- TR CENTERLINE OF TROUGH
- TT TOP OF TRAP
- VGC VERTICAL GRANITE CURB
- COM COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE
- D DRAIN
- E ELECTRIC
- G GAS
- S SEWER
- W WATER
- (ABD) ABANDONED
- 12"D(CI) PIPE SIZE AND MATERIAL
- CI CAST IRON
- PVC POLYVINYL CHLORIDE
- RCP REINFORCED CONCRETE PIPE
- VCP VITRIFIED CLAY PIPE
- X METAL FENCE
- WOOD FENCE

FELDMAN GEOSPATIAL

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BOSTON, MA 02119

WORCESTER OFFICE
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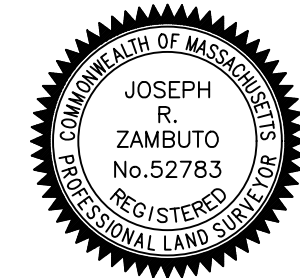
TO: COMMONWEALTH LAND TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY;

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS MAP OR PLAT AND THE SURVEY ON WHICH IT IS BASED WERE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE 2021 MINIMUM STANDARD DETAIL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALTA/NSPS LAND TITLE SURVEYS, JOINTLY ESTABLISHED AND ADOPTED BY ALTA AND NSPS, AND INCLUDES ITEMS 2, 3, 4, 5, 7(A), 7(B)(1), 7(C), 8, 9, 11(A), 13, 14, 16, 17, AND 19 OF TABLE A THEREOF. THE FIELDWORK WAS COMPLETED ON OCTOBER 10, 2023.

FELDMAN GEOSPATIAL

JOSEPH R. ZAMBUTO, PLS (MA# 52783)
JZAMBUTO@FELDMANGEO.COM

1/9/2024
DATE



DRAWING NAME:

**ALTA/NSPS
LAND TITLE SURVEY**

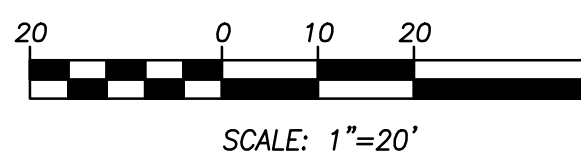
26 PLEASANT STREET
BROOKLINE, MASS.

DATE: OCTOBER 10, 2023

REVISIONS:

FILENAME: 2301100-ALTA.dwg

RESEARCH: JRZ	FIELD CHIEF: CA
PROJ MGR: JRZ	APPROVED:
CALC: JRZ	CADD: JRZ
FIELD CHK:	CRD FILE: 2301100



SHEET NO. 1 OF 1

26 Pleasant St Tree Inventory

Tree No. ¹	Species	Estimated Condition	DBH as Measured Oct 2023 (inches)	Current Circumference (inches)	Current DBH (inches)	Tree Save Area Radius (feet)	Estimated Age ² (years)
1	Maple	Very Good	16	68	22	32	65
2	White Mulberry	Good	24	92	29	44	88
3	Maple	Fair to Good	12	42	13	20	40
4	Maple	Fair to Good	12	48	15	23	46
5	Oak	Very Good	30	112	36	53	107
6	Black Cherry	Fair to Good	8	36	11	17	57
7	Unknown	Fair	20	84	27	40	80
8	Oak	Very Good	14	61	19	29	58
9	Oak	Very Good	14	60	19	29	57
10	Oak	Very Good	16	68	22	32	65
11	Oak	Very Good	10	37	12	18	35
12	Oak	Very Good	12	49	16	23	47
13	Oak	Very Good	14	53	17	25	51
14	Oak	Very Good	8	33	11	16	32
15	Maple	Very Good	18	72	23	34	69

Total DBH 291

¹ Starting at south corner of property going clockwise. Trees 8 through 14 straddle Sussman House property.

² Age estimated using diameter and tree growth factor from the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

July 22, 2026

To the Town of Brookline Planning Board re 26 Pleasant St. Zoning Proposal:

Brookline needs more housing and 26 Pleasant Street's proximity to the T, local businesses and Ridley make it a good location for a multi-family development. However, this warrant article is flawed for several reasons:

- 1) The proposal provides insufficient usable open space in a part of Brookline with by far the least open space per capita. Nordblom has added a small public parklet, but the proposal still reduces landscaped and usable open space by more than 50 percent compared to current zoning requirements.
- 2) This neighborhood is a heat island and depends on its mature tree canopy for shade, cooling, air quality and stormwater absorption, yet the proposal would likely result in either the removal or death of the property's 15 mature trees. While higher-density housing offers climate benefits by reducing carbon emissions, density alone does nothing to reduce extreme heat. Mature trees do.

A [recent citizen science project in France](#) found that nature-based solutions – particularly mature trees and green roofs – provided significantly greater cooling than technological measures such as misters, shade sails, and white roofs. [The Boston Globe also recently reported](#) that a 1.8 degree increase in temperature is associated with a 25% increase in deaths from respiratory disease and a 7% increase in deaths from cardiovascular disease. During extreme heat events every degree of cooling matters, and it would therefore be detrimental to allow this proposal to proceed as currently drafted given the impact on the neighborhood's tree canopy.

There are currently fifteen mature trees on this property.¹ Most of these trees appear to be in good health and they include seven ecologically important oaks that straddle the property line with the Sussman House Apartments. These boundary oaks provide valuable cooling shade to Sussman's elderly residents, and importantly, they are also owned by the Brookline Housing Authority. Yet based on Nordblom's intention to build to their requested setbacks, as stated at the July 14 community meeting, Nordblom would be unable to properly protect these shared trees during construction as required by the Town's tree preservation bylaw.

The bylaw requires a Tree Save Area radius of 1.5 feet for every inch of a tree's diameter at breast height (DBH). For these seven oaks, that means protected areas extending between 16 and 30+ feet from the property line depending on the tree. A 10-foot side yard setback simply cannot accommodate those protections, making significant root disturbance – and likely tree loss – inevitable. As such this proposal would permit the potential destruction of publicly owned trees whose primary beneficiaries are low-income senior residents of Sussman House.

¹ An annotated site map showing the location and approximate current size of each tree is attached.

The same issue applies to the remaining mature trees on the site, including a robust 36-inch DBH oak – the proposed setbacks will not allow for their preservation. Mr. Allen and Nordblom have stated that trees would be addressed “later,” but the requested rezoning does not appear to leave a realistic path to preserve any of this site’s fifteen mature trees. To provide complete transparency, the Town should require Nordblom to prepare a Tree Protection & Mitigation Plan post haste, which would make clear the impact of this proposal on the neighborhood’s tree canopy.

We support housing at this location, but if the Town pursues new housing without protecting our existing tree canopy, we risk repeating planning mistakes that have created environmental injustice and dangerous urban heat islands elsewhere. A [recent Boston Globe article](#) highlighted Worcester’s (anything but green) Green Island neighborhood, which is one of the hottest areas in our Commonwealth due to its lack of tree canopy. Quoting from that article, “The idea of development wasn’t for green space, it was for fitting as many people into the neighborhood as possible.” Residents there are now paying the price for that short-sightedness.

Trees aren’t amenities – as set forth in the Town’s Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan and its Climate Action & Resiliency Plan, trees are an essential component of a healthy, climate-resilient community that benefit all residents. Further, housing units don’t exist in a vacuum, they need a habitable environment for their residents. Brookline must pursue its housing goals, but it should not do so to the detriment of our climate resilience and public health. In particular, Brookline should not create space for new residents at the expense of the well-being of existing residents like the vulnerable seniors residing at Sussman.

If Brookline is truly going to be for everyone, it needs to be safe for those most at risk from extreme heat, such as the elderly, children, and individuals with asthma and other chronic health conditions. We therefore urge our community to not support this project unless it is modified to allow for the preservation of the lot’s more significant trees, especially but not limited to the boundary oaks shared with Sussman House.

Respectfully,

Alisa Plazonja and Olivia Fischer Fox
Co-Leaders, Brookline Mothers Out Front Tree Team

Attachments:

- 26 Pleasant Site Map
- 26 Pleasant Tree Inventory

July 23, 2026

From: Catherine Donaher (cdonaher@cdassoc.net)

To the Brookline Planning Board.

SUBJECT: TREES AND HOUSING at 26 Pleasant Street

Here are a few sample headlines that might have appeared in the Brookline News over the past few years regarding two very important public policy issues:

*“Brookline lags in new **housing construction** as demand continues to outpace supply”.*

*“Brookline is **losing its tree canopy** at an alarming rate--- most tree removals occur on residential properties*

*“Brookline fails to meet its share of **new housing** as the State’s housing crisis grows”.*

*“Brookline’s **tree canopy is distributed unequally** with the fewest trees in areas with dense population and lower income resulting in dangerous Heat Islands in north Brookline”.*

These headlines shout out that we have TWO BIG Issues in front of us to tackle right now. Both of them need our attention at the same time. We truly have to increase the number of new homes we produce every year **while at the same time** we need to protect and preserve our mature trees AND plant as many new trees as possible to keep away the ravages of climate change –just look at the HEAT we have been experiencing this summer. It is not going to get better and we can’t wait..we need to act now. With the 26 Pleasant project we have the need and opportunity to do both: BUILD HOUSING and SAVE TREES. Anything else is a false choice.

It’s exciting to see that the hard work and effective advocacy for building housing here in Brookline is making a difference with many more projects coming forward, more units already built and others moving through the process in furtherance of the Town’s Housing GOALS.

Sadly, the news is not as good on the tree preservation and protection front. In the past 3 years, we have seen many healthy mature trees cleared from sites for both private and public construction projects. The Brookline Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan documented that we lost tree canopy the equivalent to **10 acres more than Lars Anderson Park** between 2014 and 2020 and we are on a course to lose twice that much (2 more Larz Anderson + sized areas) by 2030 IF we don’t get SERIOUS about SAVING and PLANTING trees. Regrettably, our

town's Tree Goals are being sacrificed to creating inhospitable housing conditions---not a good way to execute responsible public policy and we will carry the cost of these short-sighted decisions for decades to come. We can't ever get the health and environmental benefits of trees we neglected to save 20 years ago.

So let's take a look at the 26 Pleasant Street Proposal on the table---They are asking for zoning to construct a building that fills almost the entire site with very limited setbacks and almost no usable open space. The proposal maximizes the number of housing units and ignores the fact that this is NOT AN EMPTY PARKING LOT.

They nowhere refer to trees in any of the materials they have provided to the public so far. How would any of you know that there are **15 mature trees** on this site and the property line with Sussman House? 15 trees whose presence benefits all of us and are protected by our Tree Protection ByLaw. BEFORE they put a pen to paper, they had to make a decision about the future of these trees—it **appears that they will cut down all of these 15 trees to clear the site for construction.**

However, these trees are protected by a law that passed Town Meeting with overwhelming support (3 to 1 in favor). AND in this proposal TOWN MEETING IS BEING ASKED TO IGNORE THAT LAW. Trees that are to be retained must be provided with a Tree Save Area that extends sufficiently into the site so that construction activity will not damage their roots and cause the tree to die. With the proposed zoning's very limited setbacks and the developer's intention to build to those setbacks, the Tree Save requirements **cannot be met**, which means that the trees will be removed - either outright or because they will not survive construction.

When asked at a community meeting last Tuesday how the developer planned to address trees, his lawyer said they would get to that later.

But here's what WE ALL need to know: unless the setbacks in the zoning proposal are changed, the outcome for these trees is a foregone conclusion.

*Before anything further happens in this review process, the Planning Board should direct the developer to produce a Tree Protection and Mitigation Plan as described in the ByLaw to inform subsequent design, planning and zoning work on this project. **How else can you-- and later the Town Meeting,-- know if the proposed zoning conditions meet the Tree Protection/Mitigation plan?** Such a plan would have been required for this hearing if the usual project review process were being followed for 26 Pleasant. By going for a vote at Town Meeting to amend the zoning instead of filing for a building permit, the applicant is bypassing the steps by which the public*

gets to see what's actually being proposed. Here tonight we can only see those aspects controlled by zoning.

Let's be serious and responsible and address the two pressing issues in front of us:

Housing production AND Tree protection. AND let's face the fact that the two need to be solved together if we are to create safe healthy places for our future residents to live and thrive.

We can do both—build housing and preserve our canopy – if we are creative and determined.

There is a terrific hospitable housing development project hiding somewhere behind the curtain in this current drama. Let's get to work and find it.

Thank You.

Catherine Donaher 20 Copley Street Precinct 2

PLEASANT STREET MULTIFAMILY OVERLAY DISTRICT ZONING

Petitioner: Jeffrey P. Allen

Article XX

To see if the Town will amend the Town of Brookline Zoning By-Law and Zoning Map as follows:

- 1. By adopting the following map change, the Town hereby establishes a new overlay district entitled the *Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District* (“PSMOD”).**

The PSMOD shall consist solely of Assessor’s Parcel ID 046-20-00, known as 26 Pleasant Street, currently located in the M-1.0 zoning district. The boundaries of the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District shall be as described above and depicted in **Figure A** below. Figure A is for illustrative purposes only and is intended to identify zoning boundaries; dimensional requirements and compliance shall be governed exclusively by the Zoning By-Law.

FIGURE A: Proposed Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District Map



2. **By amending Section 3.01.4 of the Zoning By-Law by adding the following new subsection after the existing last subsection to incorporate the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District into the list of recognized overlay districts:**

“r. Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District.”

3. **By amending Section 4.07, Table of Use Regulations, to modifying Use 6E – Multifamily Housing by adding the following sentence at the end of the use description:**

“Within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District, Multifamily Housing shall be permitted by Special Permit, subject to compliance with Section 5.06.4.r.”

4. **By amending Section 5.06.4 of the Zoning By-Law to add the following new subsection to establish governing standards, dimensional flexibility, and permitting authority for development within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District:**

“r. Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District

1. Purpose and Intent

It has been determined that 26 Pleasant Street represents an appropriate location for multifamily residential development due to its proximity to transit and established infrastructure. The purposes of this Overlay District are to:

- *Encourage transit-oriented residential development;*
- *Allow the option of commercial use on the ground floor while maintaining multifamily residential development as the principal use.*
- *Provide flexibility in height and density while maintaining oversight by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals;*
- *Ensure high-quality site planning, architectural design, and neighborhood compatibility.*

2. Applicability

The provisions of this Section shall apply to all development within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District, notwithstanding the requirements of the underlying M-1.0 district or any other provision of this By-Law to the contrary, except as expressly stated herein. All other applicable provisions of the Zoning By-Law, including provisions allowing dimensional or other relief by Special Permit, shall continue to apply.

3. Permitted Use

Multifamily dwellings containing three (3) or more dwelling units shall be permitted by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeal and subject to Design Review as set forth in Section 5.09 of the By-law.

Ground-floor commercial uses may also be authorized as part of a mixed-use development by Special Permit. Such commercial space shall be optional and shall not be required as a condition of development within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District.

4. Dimensional Standards

Notwithstanding the Dimensional Requirements set forth in Table 5.01, within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District:

- The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) may be permitted up to **4.0**; and*
- The maximum building height may be permitted up to **85 feet** and shall be measured pursuant to § 5.30.*
- The minimum required setbacks will be reduced to allow for a front yard 10-foot setback (on Pleasant Street); a 15-foot setback (on John Street), a 10-foot side yard setback, and; a 0-foot rear yard setback. Any minimum required setback can be reduced by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.*
- The minimum required useable open space will be reduced to four percent (4%) and shall not include any lot frontage required by the By-law. The minimum required landscaped open space will be reduced to five percent (5%). Any minimum required open space can be reduced by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.*

5. Parking

Notwithstanding any provision of the Coolidge Corner Overlay District or any other section of this By-Law to the contrary, above-grade, on-grade and below-grade parking located within a structure or at grade shall not be counted toward Floor Area Ratio calculations within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District. The minimum required within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District shall be reduced to 0.5 and can be further reduced by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

6. Affordable Housing

All residential development within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District shall comply with Section 4.08 (Inclusionary Zoning)."

7. Number of Units and Unit Sizes

<u>Number of Units</u>	96
------------------------	----

<u>Minimum</u>	485 GSF/477 NSF
<u>Maximum</u>	1,240 GSF/1,220 NSF

5. **By amending Table 5.01, Table of Dimensional Requirements, by adding Footnote 22, which footnote shall read as follows:**

“See Section 5.06.4.r, Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District, with respect to applicable dimensional standards and permitted modifications.”

...or act upon anything else relative thereto.

Summary Explanation

This Article proposes to create a new Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District (“PSMOD”) encompassing 26 Pleasant Street, a severely underutilized property currently zoned M-1.0, in

order to allow the development of a predominantly multifamily residential building, with an option of ground-floor commercial space, subject to Planning Board Special Permit and Site Plan Review. The overlay would permit multifamily residential development of up to seven (7) stories at 85 feet and a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.0, with reduced parking requirements consistent with transit-oriented development principles.

The proposed zoning amendment would enable the creation of approximately 96 new residential units, ranging from 1,240 GSF/1,220 NSF to 485 GSF/477 NSF, including required affordable housing, in close proximity to transit services. By concentrating housing growth in an appropriate, transit-accessible location, the Article advances the Town's Housing Production Plan, supports compliance with the MBTA Communities Act, and aligns with the scale and intent of nearby overlay districts, including the MBTA-CA Multifamily Overlay District and the Waldo-Durgin Overlay District. The proposed zoning amendment would also create 2,700 square feet of usable open space, including a 1,888 square foot pocket park in the front of the building and an 812 square foot roof deck on the 7th floor. The proposed zoning amendment would further create 7,565 square feet of landscape open space.

Importantly, the Article replaces a low-intensity, underperforming use with housing that responds to demonstrated community need, while maintaining strong Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals oversight to ensure high-quality design, neighborhood compatibility, and environmental sustainability. The redevelopment of 26 Pleasant Street is expected to significantly increase the Town's property tax base, contribute to long-term fiscal stability, and promote more efficient use of land and infrastructure, all while reinforcing Brookline's commitment to smart growth and housing opportunity.

PLEASANT STREET MULTIFAMILY OVERLAY DISTRICT ZONING

Petitioner: Jeffrey P. Allen

Article XX

To see if the Town will amend the Town of Brookline Zoning By-Law and Zoning Map as follows:

- 1. By adopting the following map change, the Town hereby establishes a new overlay district entitled the *Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District* (“PSMOD”).**

The PSMOD shall consist solely of Assessor’s Parcel ID 046-20-00, known as 26 Pleasant Street, currently located in the M-1.0 zoning district. The boundaries of the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District shall be as described above and depicted in **Figure A** below. Figure A is for illustrative purposes only and is intended to identify zoning boundaries; dimensional requirements and compliance shall be governed exclusively by the Zoning By-Law.

FIGURE A: Proposed Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District Map



2. **By amending Section 3.01.4 of the Zoning By-Law by adding the following new subsection after the existing last subsection to incorporate the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District into the list of recognized overlay districts:**

“r. Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District.”

3. **By amending Section 4.07, Table of Use Regulations, to modifying Use 6E – Multifamily Housing by adding the following sentence at the end of the use description:**

“Within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District, Multifamily Housing shall be permitted by Special Permit, subject to compliance with Section 5.06.4.r.”

4. **By amending Section 5.06.4 of the Zoning By-Law to add the following new subsection to establish governing standards, dimensional flexibility, and permitting authority for development within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District:**

“r. Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District

1. Purpose and Intent

It has been determined that 26 Pleasant Street represents an appropriate location for multifamily residential development due to its proximity to transit and established infrastructure. The purposes of this Overlay District are to:

- *Encourage transit-oriented residential development;*
- *Allow the option of commercial use on the ground floor while maintaining multifamily residential development as the principal use.*
- *Provide flexibility in height and density while maintaining oversight by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals;*
- *Ensure high-quality site planning, architectural design, and neighborhood compatibility.*

2. Applicability

The provisions of this Section shall apply to all development within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District, notwithstanding the requirements of the underlying M-1.0 district or any other provision of this By-Law to the contrary, except as expressly stated herein. All other applicable provisions of the Zoning By-Law, including provisions allowing dimensional or other relief by Special Permit, shall continue to apply.

3. Permitted Use

Multifamily dwellings containing three (3) or more dwelling units shall be permitted by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeal and subject to Design Review as set forth in Section 5.09 of the By-law.

Ground-floor commercial uses may also be authorized as part of a mixed-use development by Special Permit. Such commercial space shall be optional and shall not be required as a condition of development within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District.

4. Dimensional Standards

Notwithstanding the Dimensional Requirements set forth in Table 5.01, within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District:

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- The maximum building height may be permitted up to **85 feet** and shall be measured pursuant to § 5.30.
- The minimum required setbacks will be reduced to allow for a front yard 10-foot setback (on Pleasant Street); a 15-foot setback (on John Street), a 10-foot side yard setback, and; a 0-foot rear yard setback. Any minimum required setback can be reduced by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.
- The minimum required useable open space will be reduced to four percent (4%) and shall not include any lot frontage required by the By-law. The minimum required landscaped open space will be reduced to five percent (5%). Any minimum required open space can be reduced by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

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Notwithstanding any provision of the Coolidge Corner Overlay District or any other section of this By-Law to the contrary, above-grade, on-grade and below-grade parking located within a structure or at grade shall not be counted toward Floor Area Ratio calculations within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District. The minimum required within the Pleasant Street Multifamily Overlay District shall be reduced to 0.5 and can be further reduced by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

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The proposed zoning amendment would enable the creation of approximately 96 new residential units, ranging from 1,240 GSF/1,220 NSF to 485 GSF/477 NSF, including required affordable housing, in close proximity to transit services. By concentrating housing growth in an appropriate, transit-accessible location, the Article advances the Town’s Housing Production Plan, supports compliance with the MBTA Communities Act, and aligns with the scale and intent of nearby overlay districts, including the MBTA-CA Multifamily Overlay District and the Waldo-Durgin Overlay District. The proposed zoning amendment would also create 2,700 square feet of usable open space, including a 1,888 square foot pocket park in the front of the building and an 812 square foot roof deck on the 7th floor. The proposed zoning amendment would further create 7,565 square feet of landscape open space.

Importantly, the Article replaces a low-intensity, underperforming use with housing that responds to demonstrated community need, while maintaining strong Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals oversight to ensure high-quality design, neighborhood compatibility, and environmental sustainability. The redevelopment of 26 Pleasant Street is expected to significantly increase the Town’s property tax base, contribute to long-term fiscal stability, and promote more efficient use of land and infrastructure, all while reinforcing Brookline’s commitment to smart growth and housing opportunity.

Ms. Polly Selkoe
Regulatory Planning Director
Brookline Planning Board
July 22, 2026

Dear Ms. Selkoe:

I am writing to urge the Planning Board to ask the Nordblom Company to submit a Tree Protection and Mitigation Plan as described in Brookline's tree protection bylaw indicating the steps they will take to preserve at least some of the large trees at 26 Pleasant St.

As you know, Nordblom is seeking a zoning amendment to allow the construction of a multi-unit apartment in this location. This development would likely result in the loss of 15 large trees if Nordblom's current plan goes forward. I totally support efforts to address Brookline's need for more housing. I also recognize the critical role that mature shade trees such as those at 26 Pleasant St. play in reducing the negative impact of extreme heat on Town residents, particularly the elderly.

The Pleasant St. neighborhood's proximity to the Town's largest commercial area, a popular public library branch, and an elderly public housing development makes the street heavily used. The street also runs through one of the largest heat islands in Brookline. The existing trees are insufficient to reduce the effects of extreme heat in the neighborhood. To lose the 15 trees at 26 Pleasant will significantly exacerbate this already unhealthy environment

An additional concern is the six large oak trees in the middle of the property line between the Nordblom property and public housing apartments for low-income elderly. These trees provide shade for residents on that side of the building and so are an important source of cooling. Losing the oaks will make their apartments significantly warmer in the summer, further contributing to the unhealthy conditions created by extreme heat in that neighborhood.

I believe Brookline is best served by the development of housing that incorporates green space and trees in significant ways. For this reason, I urge the Planning Board to request that Nordblom complete a Tree Protection and Mitigation Plan before the fall Town Meeting considers Nordblom's Warrant Article seeking a zoning amendment. Completion of such a plan will provide needed assurance that Nordblom understands what preserving at least some of the trees at 26 Pleasant St. involves and has a viable plan for doing so.

Sincerely,
Ann Coles, 10 Chestnut St., Brookline 02445, anncoles@uaspire.org

Ann Coles (she/her) | Senior Fellow
uAspire
anncoles@uaspire.org | www.uaspire.org
617.875.4893 (Eastern Time)

To the Brookline Planning Board,

I am writing concerning the fate of the mature trees at 26 Pleasant St that are endangered by the minimal setbacks in the developer's current plans and the proposed Zoning Overlay Warrant Article.

Rather than repeat the information submitted by Plazonja and Fischer Fox, leaders of the Mothers Out Front Tree Team, I will focus on how the design will affect seniors living next door at the Brookline Housing Authority's low income senior housing Sussman House.

I urge the Planning Board to require a tree mitigation and protection plan early in the process of establishing the 26 Pleasant St zoning overlay. Abutters and all Brookline residents need to understand that the purposed zoning overlay not only includes a significant reduction in open space for this parcel compared to current zoning, but also permits the de facto removal of all the trees by allowing tiny setbacks, which fail to satisfy the protected tree root save area as required by Brookline's Tree Protection By-law.

At the developer's public meeting last week, the developers said they needn't consider a tree plan until later in the process. That is true, but if this issue isn't brought in front of the public earlier or discussed early in the warrant article process, it will be too late to do anything about it. Based on their proposed site plan, it is likely that we will loose all the mature trees unless the zoning overlay includes tree protection language, especially given the option of paying a relatively insignificant mitigation fee for cutting down all trees compared to the cost of the project.

There are 7 mature oak trees bordering the Sussman House, which are partly or fully residing on BHA property. Yet the BHA and the Sussman House will have little input on the viability of their trees if the current 26 Pleasant St zoning overlay is adopted.

The average estimated age of these trees is 50 years. Clearly, loss of these trees by cutting them down or by slow death due to root damage cannot be mitigated by planting young trees, which would take generations to reach similar heights (see Attached Photo labeled "26 Pleasant St Sussman Trees_Perler_43.jpeg").

Housing is important, but the contribution of our tree canopy to our environment is equally important for our health and well-being. North Brookline has the highest population density and lowest open space density in Brookline. Cutting down all the trees at 26 Pleasant St compromises this area by increasing the heat island effect and goes against the Town's stated goal of protecting and expanding its tree canopy.

The loss of the 7 Sussman House border oak trees will significantly affect the quality of life for the elderly Sussman House residents by:

- (1) Removing the calming, peaceful ambience provided by having a view of trees.
- (2) The screening provided by these trees will be replaced by a view of a building with people able to look into each others windows.
- (3) These 7 oak trees provide shade for Sussman House residents and help reduce the local heat island effect. It is widely accepted that shade can lower the ambient air temperature by as much as 15 to 20 degrees. It has a similar cooling effect on the surface temperatures of buildings, sidewalks and streets where shaded surfaces may run 20 to 45 degrees cooler than unshaded surfaces.

(4) Loss of shade on Sussman House walls and increased sun in people's apartments will result in hotter indoor temperatures requiring more cooling, increasing the drain on the electric grid and increasing the cost of utility bills.

(5) The elderly are more sensitive to the negative affects of sun and heat.

We all want increased housing, but not at the expense of our more vulnerable residents and not at the expense of creating environmental inequities.

Thank you for your consideration,
Fran Perler, Senior Advocate
74A Fuller St

Attachment:
26 Pleasant St Sussman Trees_Perler_43.jpeg



.....

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

Brookline needs more housing and 26 Pleasant Street's proximity to Coolidge Corner makes it a good location for multifamily development. However, the rezoning proposed fails to provide sufficient usable open space and it conceals the fact that 15 large trees are likely to be cut down or will die from damage to their root systems. I am writing to ask the Planning Board to direct the developer NOW to abide by the Tree Protection and Mitigation Plan described in our ByLaw. This will inform residents of their plans for the trees. It is important that when the rezoning article comes before Town Meeting in November, TMMs and their constituents understand how many trees will be lost and how little open space will be provided if the developer's rezoning is approved.

In a letter from attorney Jeffrey Allen representing the developer, Nordblom Company of Burlington, 17 Brookline Town Meeting members from precincts 2, 8, and 17 signed on to a statement identified as "Sidewalk Safety Improvements." This letter, however, is primarily asking for early support for the developer's request to rezone 26 Pleasant Street into a Multifamily Overlay District, which may come to the Town Meeting in November. So what exactly were these TMMs agreeing to?

The letter says the undersigned are "broadly supportive of adding more homes to Brookline, and are happy to support this project pending an enforceable agreement to dedicate an amount equal to 2% of hard construction costs towards community benefits." Those community benefits are sidewalk improvements.

While the TMMs are told the rezoning will permit 96 housing units, add 200 pedestrians to the street, and tremendously increase the potential for profitable development, there is no mention of their plans for the 15 large trees, whether they will cut them or cause them to die by encroaching on their critical root system. Not only do Brookline residents and TMMs not have access to any drawings of what this 7-story project might look like, they haven't even seen a drawing of the proposed footprint of the building.

Usually the problem with saving trees when a parking lot is converted into housing is that they are located in islands within the parking lot. But that is not the case here. There are 15 mature trees on the perimeter of the property, 7 of which are boundary trees with Sussman. Nordblom does not have the right to take down these trees outright. However, their requested setbacks will cause sufficient encroachment on these trees' critical root systems so that they are likely to die. Why is this profitable development unable to save some trees?

I remember when Brookline required two parking spaces per unit. (For this project that would be four or more stories of parking.) Fortunately Brookline has relaxed those rules in order to increase housing and reduce the number of cars and parking. But there is an alarming and perhaps unintended consequence of this change: it has brought a massive reduction in open space. Project after project is built out to minimal setbacks without courtyards or open space, which are needed not only for trees and stormwater retention but also for the benefit of the people who live there. This project reduces open space to 4% of the site, a 50% reduction of the existing open space requirements. What is the "parklet" they have proposed as an open space solution (only in words and square feet) other than an expression of the loss of canopy and open space?

Protecting trees is not just a good idea for providing healthy environments. In Brookline it is now in the Bylaws. Town Meeting overwhelmingly voted to support it. Trees naturally grow taller and live longer than we do. Trees appreciate over time while almost everything else degrades. Trees are a measure of how well we take care of our community. Our newly planted street trees

are failing miserably. We can't afford to cut down old trees that have survived with healthy root systems.

I hope Brookline residents and Town Meeting members will accept Select Board member Anthony Buono's invitation to tour "curb cuts and crosswalks" at the site on August 1 at 4pm. This will give them the chance to see the 15 trees whose future is in limbo.

Sincerely,
Gina Crandell
117 Stedman Street

Street Address	Zoning District
25 Cutler Lane	S-25
131 High Street	S-10
121 Carlton Street	S-7
99 Shaw Road	S-10
8 Thayer Place	T-5
8 Kilsyth Road	M-2.0
133 Bonad Road	S-7
175 Elliot Street	S-10
52 Beverly Road	S-15
216 Clark Road	S-7
27 White Place	T-5
37 Beverly Road	S-15
660 Chestnut Hill Avenue	S-15
9 Searle Avenue	T-5
47 Shaw Road	S-10
80 Greenough Street	T-6
20 Sears Road	S-40
125 St. Paul Street	M-2.0
173 South Street	S-7
14 Rangeley Road	S-15
56 Spooner Road	S-10
25 Sears Road	S-40
43 Kensington Circle	S-10
139 Columbia Street	T-5(NH)
29 Goodnough Road	S-7
9 Greenway Court	M-2.0
1020, 1022-1024 Beacon Street	L-1.0
370 Washington Street	G-1.0
191 Clyde Street	S-40
67-69 Winthrop Road	T-6
1419 Beacon Street	G-1.75(CC)
1026 Commonwealth Avenue	G-2.0(CA)
678 Brookline Avenue	I-(EISD)
1797 Beacon Street	M-1.5
1093 Beacon Street	M-2.0
7 Fairway Road	S-15
30 Lyon Road	S-7
24 Williams Street	F-1.0
71 Green Street	F-1.0
32 Auburn Street	F-1.0
32 Auburn Street	F-1.0
133 Buckminster Road	S-10
320 Woodland Road	S-15

29 Sears Road	S-40
67 Francis Street	T-5
70 Francis Street	T-5
72 Francis Street	T-5
30 Stetson Street	T-5(NH)
43 Fairgreen Place	T-6

36 out of 50 are in single or two fan family districts

Description	Relief Required	Section 6?
Construct single-story addition to single-family home	5.20 - FAR; 8.02	yes
Construct rear dormer to single-family dwelling	5.55 - Front Yard for Reano	
Remove existing rear basement entry to create one-story infill addi	5.20 - FAR; 5.43; 5.70 - R	yes
Two story rear addition in single family	5.20 - FAR; 8.02	yes
Renovate basement, second, and third floors and add dormer on se	5.43; 5.70 - Rear Yard Se	yes
Convert three-family to four-family dwelling	4.08 - Affordable Housin	no
Construct two-story addition and convert attic space for single-fam	5.20 - FAR; 8.02	yes
Convert uncovered three-season porch into habitable space	5.20 - FAR; 8.02 - Alterat	yes
Demolish attached garage to construct expanded garage with living	5.43; 5.60 - Side Yard Se	yes
Construct single-story addition with roof deck for single-family hom	5.20 - FAR; 8.02	yes
Construct second floor addition for single family	5.43; 5.60 - Side Yard; 5.	no
Convert attached garage into habitable space for single-family dwe	5.20 - FAR; 5.22.3.b.1.a -	yes
Construct two-story rear addition for single family	5.20 - FAR; 5.43; 5.60 - S	yes
Construct two-story rear addition and dormers for two-family dwel	5.43; 5.60 - Side yard Se	yes
Increase basement finished area for single-family home	5.20 - FAR; 8.02	yes
Construct new rear addition to single family	5.43; 5.70 - Rear Yard Se	yes
Construct addition to single-family home and a detached pool hous	5.20 - FAR; 8.02	yes
Convert basement to habitable space to create a fourth dwelling u	4.08 - Affordable Housin	no
Create full-height unfinished basement for single-family home	5.09.2.N - Design Review	no
Construct rear addition to single-family home	5.20 - FAR; 5.70 - Rear Y	yes
Construct additions on left, right, and rear side for single family	5.20 - FAR; 5.22.3.b.1.b -	no
Construct two-car garage addition with living area above for single-	4.07, Use #55; 5.43; 6.04	no
Construct additions to the basement, first, and second floor. Add a	5.09 - Design Review; 5.	no
Add dormers to two-family home	5.43; 5.60 - Side yard Se	yes
Demolish single-family to construct new single-family home	5.20 - FAR	yes
Add fourth floor addition to multi-family building to create two adc	4.08 - Affordable Housin	no
Merge lots at 1020 & 1022-1024 Beacon Street to add seven reside	4.08 - Affordable Housin	no
Construct addition to convert structure into a six-unit multi-family	4.08 - Affordable Housin	no
Demolish a portion of the clubhouse and construct new addition	5.09.2.I; 8.02	no
Demolish detached garage and build new garage on same foundat	5.43; 5.63 - Accessory B	yes
Convert office building into multi-family dwelling with 4 units	4.07, Use # 6 - Ground fl	no
Reconfigure interior space to create three additional units, for a to	4.08 - Affordable Housin	no
Demolish building and attached garage	5.09.2.A - Design Review	no
Convert existing finished basement in three-family into a separate	4.08 - Affordable Housin	no
Convert office building into four residential dwelling units	4.08 - Affordable Housin	no
Construct new deck for single-family home	5.43; 5.62 - Fences and T	no
Legalize 120 s.f. shed for single-family home	5.43; 5.63 - Accessory B	no
Convert single-family to two-family dwelling	5.43; 5.50 - Front Yard R	no
Demolish two-family and construct three-family dwelling	5.09.2.M; 5.43; 5.50 - Fr	no
Demolish two-family and construct three-family dwelling	5.09.2.O; 5.43; 5.44.2 &	no
Demolish two-family and construct three-family dwelling	5.09.2.O - Design Review	no
Demolish detached garage and build attached garage with a deck a	5.20 - FAR; 5.43; 5.60 - S	no
Subdivide into two lots, and construct single family dwellings on ea	5.09.2.O - Design Review	no

Construct new single-family home on vacant lot	4.07, Use#55; 5.43; 6.04 no
Expand driveway, and add two parking spaces to support conversion	5.43; 6.04.5.C.2 & 6.04.5 no
Demolish attached single-family to build detached two-family with 5.09.2.O - Design Review	no
Demolish attached single-family to build detached two-family with 5.09.2.O - Design Review	no
Demolish single-family to construct single-family home	5.09.2.O - Design Review no
Divide lot into three lots, demolish single family and build a house	(5.09.2.O - Design Review no

[illegible]

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Memorandum

To: Board of Appeals

From: Polly Selkoe, Regulatory Planning Director

Date: June 13, 2026

Re: SHORTENING THE SPECIAL PERMIT APPROVAL PROCESS FOR ONE- AND TWO-FAMILY HOMEOWNERS

Consideration of revising the zoning to make the Planning Board the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) for applications related to single- and two- family dwellings, except where variances are required or full demolition of the principal dwelling is proposed

The Select Board's Town of Brookline 2030 Road Map stresses the importance of improvements to the efficiency of outcomes and the cost of services to the public. Specifically, its report highlights two goals related to development: streamlining operations and increasing revenue through development by making permitting easier, less time consuming and less costly. To take an initial incremental step toward these goals, the Planning and Community Development Department would recommend revising the special permit approval process for one- and two-family homeowners in certain cases. These are typically requests for additions, dormers, creating livable space in a basement or attic, or adding or enlarging a garage; exclusions would include cases that require a variance or propose full demolition of the principal dwelling.

When a single- or two-family homeowner wants to construct an addition, create habitable space in a basement, or add a garage, and dimensional zoning relief is required, a process that is both lengthy and costly is necessary before permission may be granted (or denied). Because of State statutes and Brookline Zoning By-Law regulations, the process may take a minimum of six to eight months before a building permit can be issued. The process is costly because in addition to application fees, homeowners typically pay an attorney, architect, and/or engineer to attend both the Planning Board meeting and the Board of Appeals hearing to make the same presentation. Often, there is more than one Planning Board meeting, (sometimes even three or four), where the Planning Board requests changes to a proposed design or a project is controversial.

When considering ways to streamline or shorten Brookline's zoning review process, Planning staff began by reviewing last year's (2025) special permits granted by the Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). This review led to the following conclusions:

- Approximately fifty applications were submitted and completed the zoning review process, and all of those were granted special permit/variance relief by the ZBA. All applications that were approved by the ZBA also received positive recommendations from the Planning Board, though some needed multiple meetings with the Planning Board to incorporate changes and revise plans.
- Seventy per cent of the applications were located in S and T districts.

- Many (36%) argued successfully for zoning relief under M.G.L. Ch. 40A, Section 6 (allowed only for single- and two-family districts) usually for either setback or FAR relief. The State Zoning Statute and case law allow for a structure's nonconformity to be altered or increased if the Board finds that the proposal will not to be substantially more detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Of those projects involving a building addition or the conversion of unfinished floor area, the additional gross floor area requested ranged from 28 s.f. to 24,609 s.f. (The Country Club Clubhouse), with the median at 434 s.f. This does not include projects that received approval to demolish a structure and construct a new one, unless the project was granted relief under M.G.L. Ch. 40A, Section 6.

Brookline's Planning Board currently reviews and provides constructive feedback and recommendations on all zoning relief applications. The reviews often result in changes to a project's design, such as incorporating specific historic or design elements or lessening a structure's impact on an abutter or the streetscape. The Planning Board members have extensive experience reviewing applications for zoning relief and suggesting design improvements. Currently, the Planning Board members are architects, landscape architects, and planners, one of whom is also an attorney.

One option for streamlining Brookline's zoning process would be to enable the Planning Board to grant special permit zoning relief in some limited instances for proposals in single- and two-family districts, rather than have them provide only a recommendation and suggested conditions to the Zoning Board of Appeals. This would eliminate the need for a second hearing by the Board of Appeals and could simplify and shorten the review process by several months. Thus, many zoning applications could be reviewed and approved at a single meeting, rather than the two-step process currently used. Exceptions would be if a variance were required or a full demolition of the principal house were proposed.

Making the Planning Board the SPGA would:

- Allow for a quicker review process for many projects, saving homeowners time and money.
- Lighten the case load for the ZBA.
- Not increase the case load for the Planning Board.
- Decrease Planning and Building staff time attending evening ZBA hearings and writing and posting minutes.
- Decrease the cost of mailings to abutters and renters by sending mailed notices once.
- Retain newspaper notice for the Planning Board Hearing, as well as requiring a sign on the property alerting the public to a proposed change, as we do now.
- Lessen the time commitment for members of the public interested in attending and speaking at meetings.
- Retain the same appeals process to Land or Superior Court.

Those projects that might be most appropriate for review by just the Planning Board include alterations or additions to single- and two-family dwellings and changes to or establishing new driveways, parking areas or garages in S and T Districts. Variance requests and proposal for full demolition of a principal structure would continue to require Board of Appeals decisions.

Smaller projects in S and T districts comprise a significant percentage of Brookline's zoning applications. Shortening the review process could have a positive impact for homeowners seeking to renovate or improve their properties by resulting in a significant cost saving not to have to pay attorneys and designers to attend a Planning Board meeting(s) and then a subsequent Zoning Board of Appeals hearing. Meeting notices to the public and the appeals process would remain the same.

Planning Board as Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) for Alterations to Single- and Two-Family Dwellings and Properties

Planning staff reviewed last year's (2025) special permits granted by the Brookline Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA):

- Approximately fifty applications were submitted and completed the zoning review process, and all of those were granted special permit/variance relief by the ZBA. All applications that were approved by the ZBA also received positive recommendations from the Planning Board, though some needed multiple meetings with the Planning Board to incorporate changes and revise plans.
- Seventy per cent of the applications were located in S and T districts.
- Many (36%) argued successfully for zoning relief under M.G.L. Ch. 40A, Section 6 (allowed only for single- and two-family districts) usually for either setback or FAR relief. The State Zoning Statute and case law allow for a structure's nonconformity to be altered or increased if the Board finds that the proposal will not to be substantially more detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Of those projects involving a building addition or the conversion of unfinished floor area, the additional gross floor area requested ranged from 28 s.f. to 24,609 s.f. (The Country Club Clubhouse), with the median at 434 s.f. This does not include projects that received approval to demolish a structure and construct a new one, unless the project was granted relief under M.G.L. Ch. 40A, Section 6.

Making the Planning Board the SPGA would:

- Allow for a quicker review process for many projects, saving homeowners time and money.
- Lighten the case load for the ZBA.
- Not increase the case load for the Planning Board.
- Decrease Planning and Building staff time attending evening ZBA hearings and writing and posting minutes.
- Decrease the cost of mailings to abutters and renters by sending mailed notices once.
- Retain newspaper notice for the Planning Board Hearing, as well as requiring a sign on the property alerting the public to a proposed change, as we do now.
- Lessen the time commitment for members of the public interested in attending and speaking at meetings.
- Retain the same appeals process to Land or Superior Court.

SPGAS IN OTHER CITIES/TOWNS - 2026

Main Conclusions: It is not unusual for municipalities in Massachusetts to have multiple boards share permitting authority, splitting the responsibility between the ZBA, the Planning Board, or the City Council. The division of responsibility can either be done via zoning district or by use. Often, a Design Review Board exists to make recommendations to the permitting authority. (This is similar to Brookline's Design Advisory Teams for larger projects.)

Winchester appears most similar to Brookline in that the Planning Board makes recommendations to the Board of Appeals for most special permit review applications.

The municipalities are listed below in alphabetical order.

Amherst

- ZBA is the permitting authority for appeals and variances.
- Planning Board is the permitting authority for all site plan review applications.
- The ZBA and the Planning Board both issue special permits, based on use and/or zoning district.
- A Design Review Board makes recommendations to the SPGA in certain zoning districts.

Arlington:

- ZBA is the permitting authority for altering/extending pre-existing non-conforming uses and structures; large additions over 750 s.f.; variances; appeals; and comp permits.
- Arlington Redevelopment Board is the SPGA for when Environmental Design Review is triggered, which is often:
 - any new structure, outdoor use, exterior addition, or change in use that requires a special permit under the use regulations; or
 - alterations to the façade that changes the structure's architectural integrity for any of the following: property abutting any of several major thoroughfares; 6 or more dwelling units; an auto service station; an SRO building or bed and breakfast with 5,000+ s.f.; a nonresidential uses and hotels/motels in nonresidential districts with 10,000+ s.f.; a nonresidential use in a residential district with 5,000+ s.f.; mixed-use; outdoor use; or temporary, seasonal signage for a fenced athletic field to seat 300+ people.

Belmont:

- Planning Board is the permitting authority for all Design and Site Plan Review applications: any new building or addition greater than 2,000 s.f.; change in use of a non-residential or multifamily building greater than 2,000 s.f. in any zoning district; a proposal that requires five (5) or more parking spaces on the lot; or a proposal that reduces the number of on-site parking spaces or changes the configuration of off-street parking, screening, egress, utilities, drainage or lighting.
- Both the Planning Board and the ZBA grant special permits, depending on what is specified in the Zoning By-law, with the ZBA as the default permitting authority. ZBA is the SPGA for parking

reductions and commercial uses; the Planning Board is the SPGA for applications in specific districts.

Dedham

- The ZBA is the SPGA in most cases.
- The Planning Board is the permitting authority for major nonresidential projects, as well as major and minor site plan review.

Lexington:

- The ZBA is the SPGA in all cases except for special permits in the Governmental-Civic Use District.
- The Planning Board is the permitting authority for site plan review, and for applications that require both site plan review and one or more special permits.
- A Design Review Advisory Board provides recommendations on new construction, additions and exterior alterations in business districts and on any site plan review or major nonresidential project.

Medford

- The city's zoning ordinance is currently being rewritten.
- The City Council, ZBA and Community Development Board (aka the Planning Board) all act as SPGAs.
- The Community Development Board makes recommendations to both the ZBA and the City Council.
- The Community Development Board is the permitting authority for site plan review.

Needham:

- Design Review Board provides recommendations to the permitting authority on all new structures, outdoor uses, exterior additions, and exterior changes in business and industrial districts.
- Planning Board administers Site Plan Review for select major and minor projects.
- Board of Appeals grants special permits, though the Planning Board is the SPGA in some instances, such as major projects under site plan review, and for projects in special districts (i.e. Aquifer Protection District, Needham Center Overlay District, etc.). The Planning Board provides a recommendation to the Board of Appeals when the ZBA is the SPGA.
- There is a Design Review Board appointed by both the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen that makes recommendations to the SPGA in specific instances.

Newton:

- ZBA is the permitting authority for appeals, comp permits and variances.
- Special Permits granted by the City Council or a committee of the City Council.

Somerville:

- Urban Design Commission reviews and provides a recommendation to the Planning Board when required
- The permitting authority for special permits depends on the zoning district.
- In some instances, a neighborhood meeting and/or a design review meeting are required prior to the Review Board meeting.
- ZBA is the review board for permits in the Neighborhood Residence District; Urban Residence District; Commercial Industry District; Commercial Business; Tufts University Special District; and for projects that require hardship variances in all districts
- PB is the review board for site plan approval or Special permits in Mid-Rise 3 District; MR4; MR5; MR6; High Rise Districts; Commercial Districts: Fabrication; Commercial Core; Research & Development; Civic Special District; Powderhouse School Special District; Assembly Square Mixed-Use District

Waltham

- Three SPGAs: the City Council, the Board of Survey & Planning, and the Board of Appeals.
- City Council grants typical special permits, such as increases in FAR, changes of use, dimensional changes, etc.
- Board of Appeals issues variances, special permits for the removal of soil and loam, conversion of nursing homes to multi-family dwellings, changes to nonconforming structures, ADUs
- Board of Survey & Planning issues special permits regarding land deemed not suitable for building (i.e. wetlands)

Wellesley:

- ZBA is the permitting authority for appeals, variances, some special permits, site plan review for MBTA Community Projects, and appeals from Planning Board decisions.
- There is a Design Review Board appointed by the Planning Board that provides recommendations
- Planning Board is the permitting authority for Projects of Significant Impact.

Winchester

- The Planning Board makes recommendations to the ZBA on zoning relief applications.
- The Board of Appeals is the permitting granting authority for special permits and for site plan review applications.

