

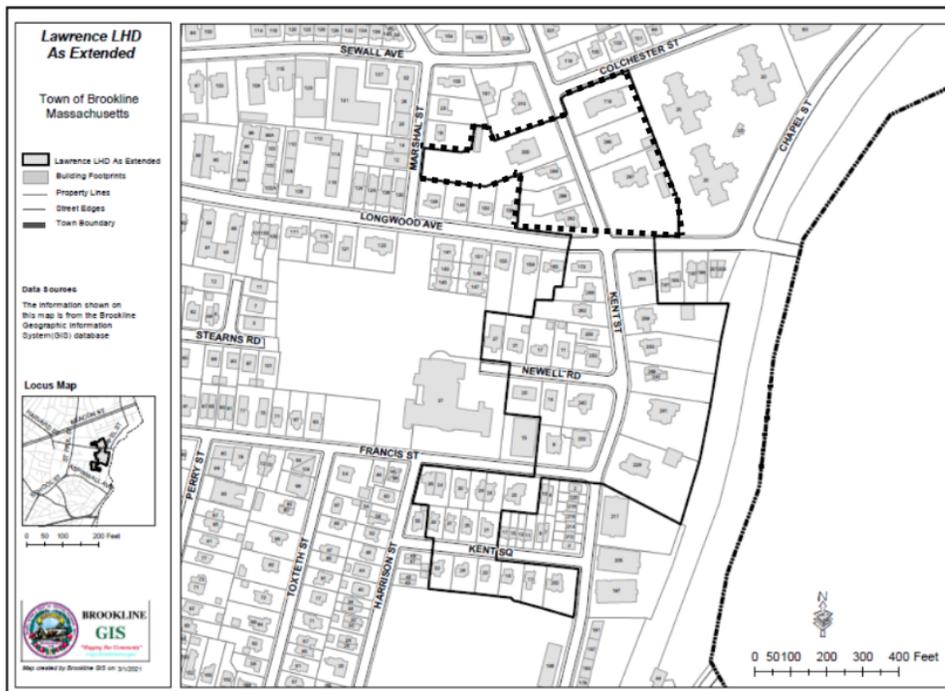
**BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Capital Subcommittee**

Report on Warrant Article 18

Amend the Town's Preservation Commission and Historic Districts By-law to extend the Lawrence Local Historic District (Preservation Commission)

The Capital Subcommittee held a public hearing on Monday, March 22nd, 2021 to review Warrant Article 18. In attendance were Carla Benka, Carol Levin, John Doggett, Harry Freidman, Amy Hummel and Pam Lodish, for the Subcommittee; Elton Elperin, Chair, Preservation Commission; Valerie Birmingham, Preservation Planner, and members of the public, Adrienne Fricke, Claire Bean, Dennis DeWitt and Eric Coles.

Warrant Article 18 proposes to amend Article 5.6.3 (f) of the Town's General Bylaws entitled Preservation Commission & Historic Districts By-Law, adding 7 properties on Kent Street to the existing Lawrence Historic District (LHD) as shown in the map below, with the extension marked with a dotted line:



RECOMMENDATION

By a vote of 6-0-0, the Capital Subcommittee recommends favorable action on Article 18.

BACKGROUND

The Chair of the Preservation Commission presented details of the proposed extension to the LHD, including photographs and history of the district as well as detailing the Commission's approval process.

The Commission had received in December of 2020 a petition by a group of neighbors who live on Kent Street requesting their neighborhood be added to the LHD which had been established in 2011. Specifically, two properties included in this proposed addition, the historically significant buildings at 116 Colchester and 295 Kent, had been subjects of a request for demolition in August 2020. The Commission worked as the study committee and retained a consultant, Shantia Anderhaggen, to work with the neighbors and preservation planners.

A preliminary study report (attached) was prepared describing the historical, cultural and architectural significance of Kent and Colchester streets and proposed adding 7 properties to the LHD. The variety of buildings in the proposed extension date between ca 1870 and ca 1935 and include Second Empire, Colonial Revival, Victorian and Tudor Revival styles.

The Commission voted in December 2020 to accept the report and submit it to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Brookline Planning Board as required by State law. A public hearing was held by the Commission on March 1st 2021. The Commission voted to accept the study report as final.

At the March meeting the Commission proposed to submit a warrant article to Town Meeting and noted any change to an LHD requires a 2/3 majority vote of Town Meeting.

DISCUSSION

The Subcommittee had some questions on the approval process of the LHD extension. One resident who had spearheaded the petition drive, noted that a significant number of residents favored the extension and no one in the neighborhood opposed it. The Commissioner noted 93% of the neighbors, including the owner of the properties proposed for demolition, were in favor, one was neutral, and none were in opposition.

The Subcommittee noted receiving an email from a Town Meeting member from Precinct 1 that supported the extension of the district.

One member of the public spoke in opposition to the proposed LHD extension as they considered an LHD a potential impediment to the building of affordable housing. In response there were several comments that an LHD was primarily concerned with the look and style and not the inside of the buildings. It was pointed out that the regulations do not exclude internal reuse and that large single-family houses have been frequently converted to multifamily and so the potential building of affordable units was not eliminated by an Historic District designation.

Another member of the public, speaking in reference to the owner of the properties on Kent and Colchester Streets that had been proposed for demolition, noted that they had undertaken

at least one adaptive reuse project with an architecturally significant structure, and that appeared to be why the owner was not opposing the extension of the District.

VOTE

The Subcommittee voted 6-0-0 to recommend Favorable Action to the full Advisory Committee.