

BrooklineCAN Membership Committee

Notes of June 12, 2017 Meeting

Attending: Peter Ames, Karen Fischer, Judith Kidd, Andrea Meyers, Linda Richards, Molly Turlish (chair), Ellen Young

Membership numbers. As of today, BrooklineCAN has 353 active (paid) members, essentially the same as the past few months. We also have 272 former members.

Spring Membership Event. Jude walked the committee through the debriefing report prepared by the planning team for the May 18 event. The final report, incorporating remarks from the Membership Committee, is enclosed with these notes. Whether to plan an event annually or less often was deferred to the July meeting, when we hope the Trevvetts and Ellen Bick will be able to participate.

Reports. Committee members reported on welcome/thank you calls to new members made since the last meeting. We gathered a corrected phone number for one of the new members. Linda reported on the June 1st workshop on extra space in your home to help you stay at home. Molly reported that the concept of offering business memberships has been referred to a task force chaired by Frank Caro that meets Thursday, June 29.

Next meeting. The next meeting is July 10, 3-4:30 at the Senior Center. The agenda will include discussion of whether to plan a spring membership event for 2018, when to meet in October, and covering the committee's basic activities in 2017-18 so that volunteering will take less time at each meeting. Molly will include a list of tasks along with potential meeting dates for October with her reminder email on July 3.

Future meetings. The committee does not meet in August, and resumes Monday September 11. Regular meetings are scheduled for second Mondays, 3-4:30 pm at the Senior Center.

Because the second Monday in October falls on Columbus Day (when the Senior Center will be closed), alternative dates are Monday the 16th or Monday the 23rd. The Senior Center is available both of those Mondays; Molly asked committee members to check calendars. To avoid covering similar agenda items at meetings close together, the October meeting may be devoted to a particular topic, such as an update on TRIPPS.

Notes recorded by Molly Turlish

DEBRIEFING MEETING FOR:
“How to Stay Young While Growing Older—and Have Fun Doing it!”
Thursday, May 18, 2017, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
An event sponsored by the Membership Committee of Brookline Community Aging
Network at the Brookline Senior Center.

Attending the debriefing meeting on May 19, 2017:
Committee Members: Ellen Bick, Karen Fischer, Judith Kidd, David Trevvett, Melissa Trevvett, Linda Richards unable to attend). Guests: Molly Turlish, Matt Weiss.

DATA (for guidance for future events):

Attendance: Seventy people attended: 35 current members (including one who renewed membership that night, seven former members (three of whom renewed within three days), and 28 non-members (one of whom joined that night).

All agreed that the name tags worked well in terms of legibility. Molly feels the color-coding of the name tags for membership status was very important, but also feels that others need to be trained so that the coding will be more useful when conversing with guests.

Evening Schedule: The final schedule is below. The program flowed smoothly and the two speakers (Steve Shain and Stacy Greenspan) were well received.

BCAN Membership Event on May 18, 2017
Schedule for TimeKeeper

Prior to the Main Program

2:30 -3:30pm—Pick up catered food and bring to BSC kitchen for refrigeration/set-up.
4pm – 4:45pm – Setup of room and registration table
4:45pm – 5:20pm – Early arrivals, registration, mingling
5:20pm – Food uncovered
5:20pm – 5:55pm – Registration, Food & Drink, Mingling
5:55pm – Announcement that program about to start

Main Program – 6 pm – 7:30pm

6:00 to 6:08 – Welcome & Introduction (8 min)
Welcome
What BCAN is and does
Lead-in to the evening – slide show, “Longevity” quote

Logistical details

6:08 to 6:09 -- Introduce Shain (1 min)
6:09 to 6:27 – Steve Shain (10-12 min presentation, then Q&A) (18 min)
6:27 to 6:28 – Introduce Stacy Greenspan (1 min)
6:28 to 6:45 – Stacy Greenspan (12 min presentation, then Q&A) (18 min)
[DT has other remarks to insert here if there weren't many Qs]
6:45 to 6:49 – DT introduces next section of program (4 min)
6:49 to 6:55 – Ellen & Linda tell their stories (3 min each)
6:55 to 7:10 or so -- Conversations at tables – What's your anecdote?
Share ideas, stories, insights (15 min or so)
7:10 to 7:23 or so – Take anecdotes or ideas from the audience (13 min or so)
(w/ Melissa ready to speak)
7:23 to 7:30 – DT Story, Recap themes, plug BCAN membership, and end event (7 min)
7:30 -8pm—Clean-up and removal of program materials, clear catered platters. Restore order to the room.

The table conversations were uneven, but all agree that it was an excellent idea to have several committee members start with their own reflections. In reporting back to the whole group, it was a good idea for a committee member to say what topics were discussed at their tables. Some used the conversation topics table tents. It was difficult to start a conversation with a small group of people at a table.

Room Set-up: The tablecloths, plates, napkins and cutlery were all provided by Julie Washburn and the Senior Center (SC). Ellen provided the blue spray centerpieces and donated them to the SC. Andrea and Ellen chose the greeting cards and Ellen selected several more and donated them to the SC. The tablecloths and sprays were saved and could be used for another BCAN event. Ellen feels that larger plates would have been good. Linda suggested that bullet points of BCAN accomplishments, placed on the tables, and on-screen during David's informative talk would have been helpful.

Linda pointed out that late arrivals should be greeted and encouraged to sit at a table with other singles. Many guests gathered in large friendly groups at tables but singles and newcomers seemed a bit isolated. Tables were unevenly populated. Some late arrivals didn't seem to know about the refreshments.

Food: The bartender provided by the SC had soda, sparkling water and wine. He also had cups for all beverages. It was a great convenience to have the SC do the arranging for the bartender and the committee is grateful to Ruthann for this contribution.

The food came from four places, all solicited by Ellen: Whole Foods, Stop&Shop, Star Market and Trader Joe's. (Wegman's came through belatedly and the gift certificate has been donated to the SC). Ellen feels the effort to solicit food donations was worth it and that Ruthann's letter with the SC tax exemption number was helpful.

Whole Foods \$50.00 gift card. Large Cheese Platter and Large Fruit Platter.

Net cost: \$34.98

Stop&Shop \$25.00 gift card. Large roll-up Platter and two 24-piece Finger Roll Platters; one chicken salad and one "seafood salad".

Net cost: \$ 84.97

Star Market \$25.00 gift card. Veggie roll-up Platter

Net cost: \$25.00 approx.

Trader Joe's Ellen picked out what she wanted: Cookies and chips. The fancier cookies were popular along with the chips.

value about \$30.00

Overall, most of the food was well received. The veggie roll-ups were not appetizing and some of them were left over. It is recommended that fruit be cut up into smaller pieces and that small fruits that roll around, like blueberries and raspberries, be avoided.

Thanks to Linda for her help with the food. She suggests that food and drink tables be closer to each other, and closer to the registration table in front. Two-and-a-half of the three water pitchers set on the catering tables were empty at the end of the event. The bartender poured water into cups from large bottles. The cheese platter was skimpier than anticipated but popular.

Publicity and Registration: Notices appeared twice in the Senior Center Bulletin, twice in the BCAN newsletter, and the email invitation, designed by Linda, went out to a mailing list of almost 900. A briefer version of the invitation went out to the same list four days prior to the actual event. A press release was sent to the TAB. The one-page invitation was distributed and posted around town.

Linda coordinated email and phone reservations. Several people RSVP'd more than once and only two-three people indicated that they were bringing a guest (except for spouses). She suggests that invitations and web/media make it clear that the event is for BCAN members (and guests).

The 44 phone reservations were answered at the front desk of the SC and Linda gathered names periodically in the time between the invitation going out and the event. The 28 email RSVP's came directly to Linda, and the balance came through personal contact or were walk-ins. Of the 33 "no-shows", 22 phoned in to RSVP and only eight used email. Once the RSVP list was complete, Linda sent it to Molly, who researched membership status and put the list into a format useful for checking people in and then printed the name tabs.

OVERVIEW: The committee considered the event a success in that it went smoothly, the room was filled, and the event reflected well on BCAN. In particular, the two speakers were very well received and the audience participated and asked questions. The Senior Center—Julie Washburn and Ruthann Dobek—provided valuable advice and assistance throughout the planning and implementation.

It has been suggested that more attention be paid to the title of the event and the subsequent program—did people have fun?

There is now a healthy debate about whether the event actually achieved one of its purposes—introducing new people to BCAN and/or encouraging lapsed members to renew. The committee set out to provide a fun evening for BCAN members and to encourage members to bring a guest. It did not appear to be the case that members brought guests, but the publicity encouraged 90 people to register to attend, 23 of whom had never attended a BCAN event before.

The committee, especially David, spent considerable time in selecting cartoons for the slide show but the actual impact is uncertain. Although Melissa and Karen spent time on creating topics for conversation at the tables, they were not uniformly used. Nor did the funny greeting cards at the tables spark conversation.

Also under discussion is whether there should be a yearly spring BCAN event. This committee worked diligently for over seven months to create this event and some feel that the effort expended may not have been worth it as a way to increase membership. David, as MC, gave an excellent plug for BCAN.

Suggestions for future events:

- The chair of the Membership Committee must be involved in the registration process because only s/he has access to the membership database. Knowing who is a former member, and who has signed in at previous events is very helpful in having meaningful conversations about membership.

- Make sure that all Membership Committee members, especially the chair, has a copy of the final schedule.
- Appoint a leader for the registration table and brief volunteers on what to do.
- Appoint hosts for each table to guide the conversations and to report back on what had been discussed. Reserve a chair at each table (BCAN brochure on the back of the chair) and provide training for each host.
- Place BCAN brochures and membership forms on each table, rather than leaving them for pick-up at the end.
- Make sure that you have enough volunteers to pick up the food and prepare it for serving—cutting up large wedges of cheese, fruit etc. Consider whether the water should be at a separate table from the food.
- Consider ice breakers so that tables interact with each other.
- Train volunteers on getting the hand mics to speakers quickly. Be aware that the speaker at the podium cannot judge how loud s/he is because the speakers are behind the podium.
- Prearrange for volunteers to lead off on sharing stories.
- Follow-up by phone/email with non-member attendees to encourage them to become members.
- Consider arranging transportation to the event

BUDGET:

Bills for food totaled \$144.95. Wine service costs included \$310 for the bartender, \$25 for the liquor license, \$394.48 for wine and other beverages, and \$7.97 for cups. The Senior Center covered the cost of the beverages and cups (\$402.45) as in-kind donations, along with the table cloths and printing of flyers. The total cost of the event was more than \$900.00