

BrooklineCAN Steering Committee

Notes

December 17, 2014

Attendance: Peter Ames, Kathy Burnes, Carol Caro, Frank Caro, Ruthann Dobek, Michelle LaPointe, Elenore Parker, John Seay, Ruth Seidman, Molly Turlish, and Karen Zweig

JF&CS Fellows with BrooklineCAN. The position related to organizing low-income seniors in public housing has been posted with ReServe, and interest has been expressed. Kathy will follow up on the status of the proposed position to help expand and update the guide to apartments and condominiums in elevator buildings.

Village-to-Village Network. Over the years, the question has been asked whether BrooklineCAN should belong to the network. From time to time, BrooklineCAN representatives have attended network meetings. Steering Committee members are asked to review the website - <http://www.vtvnetwork.org/> Villages now very widely in the sets of services they offer, and some – like BrooklineCAN – are inexpensive to join. Kathy will put together a proposal to bring to the Steering Committee. Issues include whether we can join as a group, and if not who will be responsible for making sure we gain access to activities and information of value.

Organizing a “Village” in Brookline. Frank met with Kathryn Kirchner and others about organizing a village in Brookline. They are especially interested in social connection and mutual aid. Everything the group wants is already available through BrooklineCAN, except regular social activities. Frank referred them to “Feet First,” which is primarily social. Feet First is neighborhood based (Washington Square). We believe that other neighborhoods would benefit from having similar groups. Perhaps the Education Committee would sponsor a program where one or more members of Feet First would speak about how they got started as a neighborhood-based association. Carol will pursue the idea with her friend Mary who is active with Feet First.

Request for advocacy. Susan Granoff requests that BrooklineCAN help with advocating on the state-wide issue of assessed value of property as a condition for eligibility for the circuit breaker property tax relief. The question arose of whether she is a member, and we have found that she is not.

Health Fair. A fair focusing on memory and brain health is planned for Thursday, May 14. A keynote speaker, an exercise, food demonstrations on healthy eating, and various tables are planned for the Senior Center. Sponsors include Center Communities and Brookline’s Age-Friendly City Initiative.

Possible Collaboration with Brookline Neighborhood Association. Frank was approached by former Selectman Dick Benka about collaborating with the Brookline Neighborhood Association on the Repairs / Referrals list. Frank met recently with the board (chaired by Sean Lynn-Jones)

to explain our Repair/Referrals program and to offer collaboration. Dick Benka was not present. To date, none of the neighborhood association representatives has expressed interest in collaborating with us. Our list is going through a pattern that similar lists experience: at first there was a lot of interest, but as the economy improves and volunteers dwindle away, the list is used less and providers are less eager to participate.

Education. Negotiations with the Coolidge Corner Theatre regarding a special showing of “Glen Campbell: I’ll Be Me” are ongoing, and the February date is not secure. On March 23rd, Anita Hoffer will speak at Hunneman Hall at the Main Library on aging and sexuality. June 15 is the probable date for a program with Joe Coughlin of the MIT Age Lab. Whether the Chamber of Commerce will co-sponsor is to be determined. Ruthann asked us to consider what topics should / could be revisited, and offering another “visioning your future” program was supported.

Communications. Bea Mikulecky is working with the stories project. The media relations team is working on ways to drive users to the website and is considering adding part-time job postings. Perhaps a Business Membership (possibly at \$50/year) entitles a business to free listings for 30 days (can be renewed for additional months, but the 30-day limit prevents obsolete listings from becoming permanent). They are working with Deidre Waxman, the REAP (part-time jobs) coordinator at the Senior Center, who is planning an event in January. The newsletter is now being seen as a valuable communications medium by other organizations and agencies; Brookline library events will now be listed, for example. Molly mentioned that the FAQs on the website need updating and revising; <http://www.brooklinecan.org/faq.html>.

Livable Community Advocacy Committee. The public forum on override proposals December 3rd was very successful, with more than 40 people attending, including four of the five Selectmen (the fifth was at work). Video of the forum is available on our website, and BrooklineCAN will continue to be involved in this issue. Interest has been expressed in a travel advisory demonstration, and we will hear more in months to come. Travel advisory programs assist people who are not driving and might involve a cadre of volunteers to counsel people, similar to SHINE, a volunteer-based program that answers questions about Medicare benefits.

Membership. Today, we have 298 active (paid) members, down 14 from the November Steering Committee meeting. November, December, and January are big months for renewals, and so membership numbers are often volatile. We have 270 former members; Carol, Frank, and Karen will review the list and think with Molly about how we might lure many of them back. At the override forum, 23 people signed in, including 12 active members and two former. Non-members who provided email addresses have received an email from Molly thanking them for participating and encouraging them to become members. The committee may call some or all of the non-members in January.

Molly approached Ellen Goodman about speaking at the inaugural members' event in May 2015. Ellen typically speaks when she can raise money for The Conversation Project, and Molly will call their management team about whether we could have Ellen speak without payment; some alternative way to have the event strengthen The Conversation Project might substitute for payment, and Molly will bring ideas back to the Steering Committee.

Professional service providers. Their most recent meeting featured Dawn Siber from Brookline Public Health talking about the emergency buddies program. They have been discussing broadening membership criteria to include professionals with a substantial client base in Brookline who are nominated by a PSPG member and voted by the group. When asked whether PSPG members promote BrooklineCAN membership to their clients, Michelle replied that – at least in her office – they could be more active about it; she agreed to raise the topic with the group.

Finance. We have approximately \$19,000 on hand, an increase of about \$3,000 since the beginning of the fiscal year. Income for the first half of December has been unusually high because of the renewal of a Platinum membership and because of the bulge of renewal dates in November and December. An issue for the finance Committee to deal with is how to handle the new Sustaining Memberships in the budgeting process: we need to count the income this year, but we need to consider “encumbering” the amounts designed to cover the second and third years so they will be available.

Pedestrian Friendly. Frank is working with Henry Winkelman on enhanced pedestrian-friendly features in North Brookline. Their slide show may be viewed at a future meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 21 at 3:00 PM. Future meeting dates for 2015 are 2/18, 3/18, 4/15, 5/20, 6/17, 7/22, 8/19, 9/16, 10/21, 11/18, and 12/16 – all third Wednesdays from 3-4:30.

Notes prepared by Molly Turlish