

BrooklineCAN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes February 18, 2026

Attendees: Marilyn Benson, Carol Caro, Susan Granoff, John Seay, Ruth Seidman, David Trevvett, Matthew Weiss, Emily Williams, Sonia Wong.
Guests: Diane Abrams, Elaine Barlas, Clair Bonfillio, Christopher Bosso, John McGuire. Staff: Jessica Milley-Gee

1. Welcome Neighbors Connect

a. Introductions

- i. Christopher Bosso – Recruitment Committee
- ii. Clair Bonfillio – Recruitment Committee Co-Chair
- iii. John McGuire – JP@Home
- iv. Elaine (Laney) Barlas – Member Neighbors Connect 6 yrs.
- v. Diane Abrams – JP@Home
- vi. Emily Williams – Brookline CoA & Senior Center Director, co-chair of Age-Friendly Cities Committee with Matt Weiss (advisory committee to Select Board), and co-chair with Ruth Seidman to BrooklineCAN.
- vii. Marilyn Benson – Newest member of BrooklineCan on the Steering Committee working on Membership Committee.
- viii. Susan Granoff – Chair of the Livable Community Advocacy Committee (advocacy arm of BrooklineCan) and involved in Town government. I was a town meeting member, am on the Town's finance committee, and I chair the subcommittee that holds public hearings on the Council on Aging's budget.
- ix. John Seay – Treasurer & webmaster of BrooklineCAN & work with Matt on Age-Friendly Cities Committee's TV show.
- x. Matt Weiss – Co-chair of Age-Friendly Cities Committee, Clerk on this Steering Committee, & host of the Age Friendly Cities TV show.
- xi. Sonia Wong – Member BrooklineCan Steering Committee.
- xii. Carol Caro – A founding member of Brookline Can (with her husband Frank) & edit the BrooklineCan newsletter (monthly newsletter to 1000+ people) & working on updating the Age-Friendly business campaign.
- xiii. David Trevvett – Brookline CAN 10 yrs., chair the town's Pedestrian Advisory Committee (created by advocacy of BrooklineCAN), town meeting member and member of Moderator's committee for new outdoor lighting regulations.

b. Neighbors Connect

- i. JP@Home became Neighbors Connect last year since not Jamaica Plain-centered any longer.

- ii. 10th anniversary with about 135 members, most in Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, Roslindale, but also in Brookline.
 - iii. Part of Villages Movement started in Beacon Hill in 1999.
 - iv. Neighbors caring for neighbors, non-profit, supporting aging-in-place and change paradigm of aging.
 - v. Connect to support services and social connections.
 - vi. Provide community and services that offer activities and social activities and educational programs.
 - vii. Health & welfare activities and volunteer assistance.
 - viii. Transportation, home maintenance, and technology coaching – Teach Tech2Me activity for technology.
 - ix. Ethos – Major service provider to senior citizens in Boston area. State-authorized provider going back to the 1970s.
 - x. Activities – Planned by Neighbors Connect not Ethos.
 - xi. Ethos Services – Discounted due to Neighbors Connect dues & provide in-home healthcare, needs assessment, safety inspections, access to direct care professionals.
 - xii. Location – Most members in JP & Roslindale others in Brookline, West Roxbury & southern Hyde Park.
 - xiii. Note – No Senior Center in/near JP, but trial Senior Center in West Roxbury by Ethos modeled on Neighbors Connect.
- c. Experiences
- i. Clair – Joined Current Affairs group, Storytelling Group, Aging & Spirituality, a cooking show (Passed the Apron), dining out and morning connection breakfasts together.
 - ii. John M. – Joined Outreach Meeting, walking groups (6 days/week), join a new group of people and stay in own home, DIY Group (repairs/odd jobs by & for members).
 - iii. Diane – Introduced by Tammy Mitchell, during pandemic JP@Home had lots of activities on Zoom, Living Alone group, wine/cheese get togethers in nice weather in backyards, & walking groups, Dining Out & Morning Connection.
 - iv. Elaine – Feel part of a **community with an identity**, continually active in a number of things, joined for walking group,
- d. Ruth & Carol & David & Susan re BrooklineCAN
- i. History and mission – Founded 15 years ago to provide services for seniors in Brookline.
 - ii. Different model from the villages model, focusing on advocacy and communication about available services.
 - iii. Work closely with Senior Center, which offers wide variety of programs and services, and has been involved in initiatives

such as creating age-friendly infrastructure and providing free medical transportation.

- iv. Senior Center is located in middle of Brookline.
- v. Goal was to cause Town departments and services to become more age-friendly.
- vi. Working with active (25 years) Senior
- vii. Center to provide complementary services.
- viii. David – **BrooklineCAN doesn't build community but we can possibly learn from Neighbors Connect.**
- ix. Susan – Brookline is a volunteer government, i.e., a community.
- e. Cost structure for Neighbors Connect members
 - i. Social membership (\$35/month \$127/year deductible), full membership (\$50/month or \$83/month per household).
 - ii. Carol – Suggested checking out Friendship Works.
 - iii. Public sessions – Many sessions/events open to public.
 - iv. Ethos manages website, finances, et. al.
- f. Emily comments – Organizations complement each other.
 - i. Note – Brookline members of Neighbors Connect can access Senior Center services.
 - ii. Can Brookline members access Ethos services?
 - iii. Claire – Yes. Brookline is in Ethos “catchment” area.
- g. **Actions**
 - i. Emily – Send list of Neighbors Connect programs to all.
 - ii. Consider – New members required to join a group.
 - iii. Share email addresses to reach out to each other.
 - iv. Add Neighbors Connect attendees to newsletter distribution.
 - v. Plan get together for spring (coffee, meeting, other).
 - vi. Neighbors Connect send emails to Emily.

2. Treasurers report (John Seay)

- a. Expenses
 - i. Regular expense for newsletter printing.
 - ii. Additional printing for the Age-Friendly Business project.
- b. Contributions
 - i. Sparse – May be related to late recording of payments.
 - ii. John – Send names of recent renewals to Marilyn.
- c. Discussion re use of Dropbox.

3. Projects

- a. Co-sponsor Women's History program March 18
 - i. Brookline Village Library at 1pm.
 - ii. LWV, Senior Center and BrooklineCAN are sponsors.
 - iii. Publicize it in the newsletter.
 - iv. Membership opportunity.

- b. Age-Friendly Business Campaign
 - i. Letters sent to appropriate new businesses since 2020.
 - ii. Application form included and can return the application form to us at the Senior Center, and then we would schedule a visit to them to talk about age-friendly business.
 - iii. Attempt to contact those not heard from and schedule a time to talk with them.
 - iv. Five workers each with a neighborhood assigned.
 - v. Contacting businesses on list to see if they still exist and if they have any questions.
- c. Continue the work on WA13
- d. Candidates Forum
 - i. LWV wants to work with us.
 - ii. Carol and Diana McClure will connect.
 - iii. Lots of people running for the School Committee.
 - iv. 2 people running for 2 seats on Select Board.

4. Committee Reports

- a. Membership (Marilyn Benson)
 - i. No report.
- b. Communications (Carol Caro)
 - i. Newsletter – (Carol Caro) No report.
 - ii. News releases and Outreach – No report.
 - iii. Website and social media – (John Seay) No report.
 - iv. AFC-TV – (John Seay) No report.
- c. LCAC & Notetaker – (Susan Granoff)
 - i. March 9th – John VanScoyoc as guest candidate.
 - ii. March 9th – Part 2 of Q&A with Sam Mintz.
- d. Education
 - i. No report.

5. Review of 2026 Priorities (Develop plans for each)

- a. No discussion.

6. Old and New Business

- a. March 19th – Full Advisory Committee discussing CoA budget.
- b. Date in 1st 2 weeks in March is public hearing on CoA budget.

7. Next Steering Committee meeting: February 18, 2026 at 3 PM