

BrooklineCAN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes February 19, 2025

Attendees: Marilyn Benson, Ruthann Dobek, Janet Gelbart, Susan Granoff, Bea Mikulecky, Yolanda Rodriguez, John Seay, Ruth Seidman, David Trevvett, Matthew Weiss, Sonia Wong. Staff: Jessica Milley-Gee

1. Discussion on Annual Meeting 2025

- a. Need to set up a committee shortly to proceed with planning.
 - i. All consider who will agree to be on the committee.
- b. Possible theme and speaker.
 - i. Staying at home safely is a possible theme.
 - ii. Speaker from Institute for Human Centered Design Boston.
 - iii. Valerie Fletcher?
- c. 15th anniversary of BrooklineCAN?
- d. Schedule
 - i. Between Labor Day and High Holidays (9/1 to 9/22).
 - ii. 2nd or 3rd week in September.
 - iii. Brookline Day 9/7 or 9/14.

2. Priorities/Activities for 2025 as discussed at Dec 2024 meeting

- a. Participate in CoA Director transition and work with new Director.
- b. Support more secure funding for Council on Aging as senior population grows and needs increase.
- c. Candidate Forum in the spring.
 - i. Immediate project.
- d. Annual meeting in the fall.
 - i. 15th anniversary of BrooklineCAN?
- e. Participate in offering educational events.
- f. Continue efforts to engage and build membership; clarify role of the organization and communicate.
- g. Seek ways to revitalize Age-Friendly Business Program

3. Update on Council on Aging Director's succession

- a. Candidate – Emily Williams.
 - i. Current CoA Director in Bridgewater.
 - ii. 20 years experience in aging services.
 - iii. Early job was at Goddard so knows Brookline.
 - iv. Substantial well-rounded career in field of aging.
 - v. Masters in Gerontology from UMass Boston.
 - vi. Well-qualified and passion for older adults.
 - vii. Next steps – CoA vote and Select Board vote 2/25/2025.
 - viii. Anticipated start date is Monday 3/24/2025.
 - ix. Facing a huge amount of work.

- b. Ruthann officially retired 1/31
 - i. Working 25 hours per week through April.
- c. Major staffing issues.
 - i. Maria Foster took a job with the state in Mass DOT.
 - ii. List of major staffing issues.
- d. 2 key activities – advocacy and providing Emily the history and background.

4. Discussion of Candidate's Forum 2025

- a. See report by Janet Gelbart at end of Minutes.
 - i. Matt – Agreed to be timekeeper.
 - ii. Devon Fields – Moderator.
 - iii. Janet, Bea, Carol and Marilyn represent BrooklineCAN
- b. Communication plan (Promotion)
 - i. John – Need 1 or 2 email blasts re save-the-date.
 - ii. Content can be the same as LWV but different email lists.
 - iii. Email and website use to promote.
 - iv. Need to establish a joint timeline for the save-the-date.
- c. Communication Plan (Post event)
 - i. Post Forum promotion important due to lack of livestream.
 - ii. John & Matt – Ensure LWV and BrooklineCAN has link.
- d. Preparing questions – Janet, Marilyn and Carol.
 - i. Note that the Select Board member has greater influence on older adult matters so more time should be spent on Select Board than School Board candidates.
 - ii. School Board candidates important due to \$8.5M deficit.
- e. *****

5. Update on Brookline's Comprehensive Plan

- a. Waiting on the consultant's report in the next couple of weeks.

6. Treasurers report (John Seay)

- a. Newsletter was main expense.
- b. Membership dropped to 176.
 - i. John will send list of dropped memberships.
 - ii. Note – 600 former members.
 - iii. Marilyn – Volunteered to call recent dropped members.
- c. Suggested questions for lapsed members.
 - i. What would you like to see BrooklineCAN do today?
 - ii. Mention Candidates Forum and 15th Anniversary Meeting.
 - iii. Not request specific commitments.
 - iv. What talks would interest them and might they present?

7. Committee Reports

- a. Membership
 - i. See item 6.
- b. Communication

- i. Newsletter – Ready for distribution.
- ii. News Releases – Next is Candidates Forum.
- iii. Website – Note quotations on home page.
- iv. AFC-TV – Episode 52 is Jessica Smyser new Executive Director of BIG. Working on BIG as a method of community communication including podcasts.
- v. Social Media – BrooklineCAN logo attracted more likes on Facebook. Matt to publish link to Newsletter on BrooklineCAN page and Group on Facebook.
- c. Livable Communities Advocacy Committee
 - i. Next meeting – March 10th 2 candidates for Select Board (Liz Linder and Carlos Ridruejo).
 - ii. Session will be recorded but not posted on website to be fair to candidates that have not yet appeared before LCAC.
 - iii. Note previous meeting with candidate Michael Rubenstein did not have a recording due to technical issues.
 - iv. Slides and notes from previous meeting will be available on BrooklineCAN website.
 - v. HELP program was excellent informative re Senior Center HELP services.
 - vi. Considering other programs about senior services available in various Town departments such as Fire Department.

8. Old and New Business

- a. Tent ordered arrived – Broken.
- b. Susan will let us know when CoA meeting of Advisory Committee is scheduled.

9. Next Steering Committee Meeting: February 19, 2025 3PM via Zoom

BrooklineCAN Membership as of 2/15/2025: 176

BrooklineCAN Membership as of 1/15/2025: 184

BrooklineCAN Membership as of 12/16/2024: 186

BrooklineCAN Membership as of 11/18/2024: 186

UPDATE ON CANDIDATE'S FORUM 2025

Here are the highlights of our meeting today (2/13/25):

- Devon Fields has agreed to be the moderator.
- Forum will be held at the Senior Center on 4/10 from 4 to 6. It will be in person only. League will arrange with BIG for recording to be posted on their website.

- Given the number of candidates, we will limit the SB to the first half hour and leave 1.5 hours for the 8 School Committee candidates. Time limits will be strictly enforced.
- Participants will be limited to a 2-minute introduction of who they are and what they hope to accomplish.
- 2 or 3 questions selected by the sponsoring organizations to kick off each respective session - candidates will each have 2 minutes to answer these questions
- open to audience questions - question askers will have 1 minute to ask their questions, candidate's will each have 90 seconds to answer these questions
- 30 second warnings will be given to candidates in advance of their time concluding and then a hard stop
- Most of the time will be reserved for questions from the audience. People will also be able to submit written questions in advance.
- Candidates are being contacted now to "Save the Date" and will receive rules about the format early in March.
- BrooklineCAN March newsletter will have "Save the Date" and League will publicize "Save the Date" through their own channels.
- Feedback from Steering can be shared at the next Planning Committee meeting on 2/26.