

BrooklineCAN Steering Committee Meeting Minutes January 21, 2026

Attendees: Marilyn Benson, Carol Caro, Susan Granoff, John Seay, Ruth Seidman, David Trevvett, Matthew Weiss, Emily Williams, Sonia Wong.
Staff: Jessica Milley-Gee

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

- a. Based on the results of the comprehensive needs assessment to be conducted in the first part of the year in partnership with researchers from the UMass Boston Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, advocate for increased support for Brookline's older adult population.
 - i. General agreement as to importance of this priority.
 - ii. Note – Each priority is a project and each needs a plan.
 - iii. Emily – Updates on the town budget process, emphasizing the need for an override to support services, including a new CoA line item for subsidized transportation.
 - iv. Emily - Mentioned a town administrator-led Budget 101 presentation to inform the public about the town's financial situation and the impact of the override.
 - v. CoA Budget – 2 budgets submitted one assuming approval of the override and the other with no increases other than annual 2% salary increases.
 - vi. CoA Budget with Override – Includes \$100,000 for transportation.
 - vii. January 27th Chas Carey will be doing outreach on budget.
 - viii. Budget outreach – Senior Center, Library, Virtual, et. al.
 - ix. All – Agreed to continue work on Warrant Article 13, aiming to maintain momentum and address evolving plans for town facilities, including potential housing developments.
- b. Bring in new members and encourage greater participation by current members. Re-activate the Membership Committee, possibly re-envisioning as Membership/Education/Programming, and consider some type of membership drive.
 - i. Marilyn suggested this should be the top priority.
- c. Present the Candidate Forum in April prior to the May Town elections with the possibility of also addressing issues such as the override.
 - i. Emily – Reserve space at the Senior Center for April 16th.
 - ii. Ruth – Ask Janet about potentially coordinating the event.
- d. Consider alternative approaches for the Annual Meeting
 - i. No discussion.

- e. Continue revitalization of the Age-Friendly Business Project
 - i. Summary – Discussed the age-friendly business project, which currently involves 6 people led by Carol including Sonia, Melissa, Jerry Feuer, and 3 new participants from a Brookline Beacon ad. Ruth explained that the goal is to update the business list, contact new businesses, and increase publicity about the age-friendly concept, with businesses being encouraged rather than required to meet specific criteria. John raised concerns about the lack of visible updates to business listings, prompting Ruth to commit to discussing this with Carol, who leads the initiative. Matt clarified that businesses are not required to join as business members but are encouraged to adopt age-friendly practices, with the program focusing on education and aspiration rather than strict compliance. Led by Carol - 6 people working on it to some degree.
 - ii. Town has provided list of new businesses since last pass.
 - iii. Criteria – On BrooklineCAN website and are inspirational and aspirational so website identifies what criteria are met and what need to be worked on to attract older adults.
 - iv. Need to identify changes in the businesses but as of now not part of the effort – Ruth will review with Carol.
 - v. Sticker if – Many aspects of age-friendly and want to improve, i.e., not “age-unfriendly”.
 - vi. Age-unfriendly – i.e., 10 steps to enter with no alternative.
 - vii. Overall Criteria – In Brookline, unexpired business license, hospitable to older adults. No ask for money only to become even more age-friendly.
 - viii. Note – Criteria needs to be updated based on technology.
- f. Explore opportunities for partners and sponsors
 - i. No discussion.
- g. Consider survey of BrooklineCAN membership
 - i. Surveys of UMass Boston Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Plan so perhaps no other survey necessary.
 - ii. Needs Assessment timing, aims, etc. to be available soon.

2. Treasurers report (John Seay)

- a. Expenses
 - i. Standard with Sandy's salary being a major expense.
 - ii. Sandy's salary will rise based on additional hours planned.
- b. Contributions
 - i. Note – 11 donations ranging from \$35 to \$1000

3. Projects

- a. Age-Friendly Business Program

- i. See item 1.e.
- b. Continue the work on WA13
 - i. Agreed to continue work on Warrant Article 13, aiming to maintain momentum and address evolving plans for town facilities, including potential housing developments.
 - ii. Consider hard asks for \$ next time.

4. Committee Reports

- a. Membership (Marilyn Benson)
 - i. Ad in Beacon this month by Carol, Marilyn & Ruth.
- b. Communications (Ruth Seidman)
 - i. Newsletter – (Ruth Seidman) Lead article is interview of John Seay. Environmental group is Mothers Out Front. An article about the Age-Friendly Business campaign.
 - ii. News releases and Outreach – No report.
 - iii. Website and social media – (John Seay) Most of website structure not updated since 2011 (Ralph & Sylvia Memolo). Updated is pages with upcoming events (AFC-TV, BIG Senior Programming), links page (based on John Seay rules). Links include links to the newsletters the Senior Center website. Velda Shaby is backup web master and now has learned the membership database as backup. Issue is content. Noone seems to want to work on content. Ruth would work with someone who wanted to do content.
 - iv. AFC-TV – (John Seay) Record 8 shows in 2025 with 2 at year-end (Food Pantry & Office of Emergency Management). None scheduled. (Suggestion: Erin Chute, Director DPW).
- c. LCAC & Notetaker – (Susan Granoff)
 - i. February 9th meeting – Q&A with Select Board candidate Amanda Zimmerman. All try to attend.
- d. Education
 - i. No report.

5. Old and New Business

- a. Neighbors Connect (formerly JP@Home) – Claire Bonfillio.
 - i. Now a part of ETHOS.
 - ii. Follow the “Village” approach like Beacon Hill Village.
 - iii. Provide services similar to the Senior Center, BrooklineCAN and Springwell.
 - iv. Emily – Ask Claire to come to next meeting.

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