

Brookline Community Aging Network

Livable Community Advocacy Committee

Notes

June 5, 2017

Attendance: Marion Freedman-Gurspan, Joan McCabe, Ann Stitt, Asaya Zimboff, Elaine Mountleigh, Matt Weiss, Roberta Winitzer, Susan Granoff, Vera Sharma, John Harris, and Frank Caro

1. Because of illness, the presentation on BrookOnLine by Ben Vivante, Brookline Information Technology was postponed.
2. Town Meeting Outcome on issues of interest to BrooklineCAN. All of the proposals supported by BrooklineCAN were passed by Town Meeting.
 - a. Article 12 Creation of an article in the Town's by-laws concerning the Commission on Disability. The presentation at Town Meeting organized by chair Saralynn Allaire did an effective job of showcasing the revival of the Commission on Disability. Town Meeting support was unanimous.
 - b. Article 18 speed limits in "thickly settled or business districts" and Article 19. Speed limits "Safety zones." Town Meeting members strongly support reduced speed limits. However, there was an unexpected discussion of possible racial profiling by police in enforcement of lower speed limits. The concern is that blacks and Hispanics may be more likely to be stopped by police for traffic violations. Town Meeting members were sympathetic to the concern. The Transportation Board is likely to set the default speed limit throughout Town at 25 miles per hour. Boston has already established the 25 mph limit. Article 19 creates an opportunity for the Senior Center to apply for establishment of a safety zone on Winchester Street near the Center.
 - c. Article 20. Upholding and adhering to the Paris Climate Change Agreement of 2015. The resolution passed unanimously. A practical aspect is the Green Energy program that the Town is offering to residents.
 - d. Article 23 Gas Tax Resolution to support local pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transportation infrastructure. Town Meeting was supportive of the intent of the resolution. There was some useful discussion of the State's responsibility for transportation infrastructure spending and options for generating revenue for transportation infrastructure improvements. The next step is in the hands of the Legislature.
3. Update on Route 51 bus stop at Dudley Triangle and plan for restrooms at Brookline Reservoir Park. The MBTA is projecting that it will install a sign announcing the Route51

stop this month. We are not pleased by the long delay in establishing the new bus top. Town Meeting passed funds that will permit the installation of rest rooms in the gatehouse. Brookline Reservoir Park is an attractive walking destination. The distance around the reservoir is nearly a mile. The path is flat; the views are good; and there are many benches.

4. We discussed the modest attendance at the educational program on creative use of extra space in homes. The potential audience for the topic is narrow. Half of Brookline seniors are renters. The topic applies only to home owners. Most homeowners live in condo units. The topic may apply only to owners of single-family homes. Some senior home owners deal with the extra living space issue by downsizing. Some people were confused by the focus of the workshop. Some confusion could have been averted with use of the term "living space" instead of simply "space." (One member came because she is interested in storage space.)
5. Need for attention to pedestrian lighting on Winchester Street. Frank will contact DPW to remind our contacts there to look at Winchester Street now that the leaves on the trees are fully developed.
6. Need for updating on rest room project. The project was an early success for the committee. We need a few volunteers to update our data. Interested individuals should contact Frank
7. Frank gave a brief report on first meeting of Pedestrian Advisory Committee. We distinguished between the role of the new committee and our role as advocates.
8. We agreed to make bicycles a topic for a future meeting. Committee members have two interests: regulation of bicycles on sidewalks and cyclist responsibilities (both in the streets and on the sidewalks.) We dealt with bicycle-on-sidewalk issues in the past, but the problem persists.
9. Susan Granoff called attention to the likely impact of expected overrides on seniors. Within the next year, we can expect that voters will be asked to approve over-rides to finance school costs that would result in 10 to 12% increases in property taxes. Some senior home owners are already heavily burdened with property taxes. Susan wants relief for these seniors.
10. Some members would like improved notification of public meetings in Brookline. Some members live in buildings that are not on the TAB distribution list. Frank has asked the editors of the BrooklineCAN newsletter to publish information on how members can sign up to get email notifications about meetings of Town committees.
11. Next meeting: Monday, July 24 at 3:00 PM

Notes prepared by Frank Caro