

Brookline Community Aging Network

Livable Community Advocacy Committee

Notes

March 28, 2016

Attending: Elaine Mountleigh, Carol Schraft, Susan Granoff, Henry Winkelman, Peter Ames, Ruthann Sneider, Ann Stitt, Roberta Winitzer, Frank Caro, and Guests: Lt. Paul Canney and Lt. Patrick Canney, Brookline Fire Department

Free smoke alarms for seniors. Lt. Paul Canney and Lt. Patrick Canney of the Brookline Fire Department explained the new Smoke Alarm Installation Program for seniors. The Department has an 18 month federal grant; the department has one of two such grants in MA. To date the program has visited 45 senior households; another 61 are on a waiting list. Funds are sufficient to serve a total of 150 households. The program provides as many as two alarms per household. More funds are being sought because of the popularity of the program. The firemen are installing detectors that will last for 10 years without battery replacement. At the end of ten years, the detectors should be removed and replaced. Interested residents can call Liz Scott at 617 730 2263.

The firemen are doing more than installing smoke alarm detectors. They are encouraging seniors to complete a "file of life" that is to be attached to refrigerators. The file is intended to record information that emergency responders are likely to need. Firemen are also distributing home safety information. The firemen now also provide information about the Health Department's "Buddies" program.

The officers were not aware of the Norfolk County "Are You OK" program. Frank offered to send them information.

The Fire Department answers over 7,000 calls per year. More than half are for medical emergencies.

The Fire Department is offering a special smoke alarm for seniors who are hearing impaired. These alarms produced extra noise and display a strobe light.

Update on Senior Center parking. The Transportation board has approved a parking program for Senior Center volunteers. Space will be provided for eight volunteers, six at the Fuller Street lot and two at the Center Street lot. The program will be administered by the Senior Center.

Volunteers will pick up tags at the Senior Center and display the tags while they are parked. Volunteers will return the tags to the Center. The launch date for the new program has not yet been announced. The Council on Aging and BrooklineCAN worked for four years to get approval of the program.

The Transportation Board has not acted on a proposal for extended on-street parking for users of the Senior Center. Transportation Board staff has not yet made a recommendation to the Transportation Board. The request for extended on-street parking was made four years ago. The request was made by South Brookline residents who prefer to drive to the Senior Center. These residents combine the visit to the Senior Center with other stops. They are attracted to activities that keep them at the Center for more than two hours.

Ruthann Sneider suggested a shuttle service from the Putterham Branch library parking lot to the Senior Center. We raised questions about whether the Elder bus visits South Brookline. We will make these special forms of transportation our major topic at a future meeting. Kerri Ann Tester of the TRIPPS program may be able to provide information.

Pedestrian committee. The Transportation Board is expected to vote favorably on creation of a standing pedestrian committee at its April meeting. The pedestrian committee will be an outgrowth of LCAC pedestrian advocacy. The proposal to establish a pedestrian committee was discussed favorably at the March Transportation Board meeting. Frank, Henry, and Matt Weiss represented LCAC at that meeting.

Complete Streets Policy. The Board of Selectmen is expected soon to adopt a Complete Streets Policy. BrooklineCAN co-sponsored a forum in 2014 that introduced Complete Streets to Brookline. At a previous meeting, LCAC provided feedback on a draft of the policy statement. Some of our recommendations have been incorporated.

Seniors who ride bicycles. John Harris spoke about the interest of cyclists in bicycle tracks that would separate cyclists from both pedestrians and motorists. John explained the difference between bicycle lanes and bicycle tracks with emphasis on the greater protection for cyclists provided by bicycle tracks. John also reported on transportation planning for Babcock Street. A committee appointed by the Transportation Board is proposing a two-way bicycle track on Babcock Street. For much of its length, Babcock Street would become one-way. Babcock would be the first street in Brookline with a bicycle track.

Warrant articles. We will consider only one warrant article, #17 that is concerned with trash collection. The article is a resolution encouraging the Town to provide residents with an option to opt-out of the Town's proposed program to pick up trash with "toter carts" when the use of "toter carts" is impractical. We will take a position on the warrant article at our April meeting.

Susan Granoff will take the lead in our discussion of the warrant article. Susan served on a Town Administrator's task force that considered the new trash removal system.

Election forum. We will not sponsor an election forum this year since there is only one candidate for Board of Selectmen. We may organize a forum for the Board of Selectmen to answer questions from seniors at some future time in the future.

John Street/Green Street seating area. We did not have time to hear a report from Frank that the Parks and Open Space Division is starting a project this spring to improve the seating area at John Street and Green Street. We requested improvements to this open space at an early meeting of the committee with Erin Gallentine. The project will provide improved trees, shrubs, and seating.

Next Meeting: Monday, April 25 at 3 PM.