

# Brookline Community Aging Network

## *Livable Community Advocacy Committee*

### Notes

March 6, 2017

Attendance: Ann Stitt, Susan Granoff, Henry Winkelman, John Harris, Roberta Winitzer, Carol Seibert, Peter Ames, Mila Rudyakov, Irving Kurki, Jackie Wright, Asaya Zimboff, Joan McCabe, Frank Caro, Donna Murphy (guest), Virginia Bullock (guest), and Roger Blood (guest)

1. Irving Kurki circulated a new educational pamphlet from Cambridge offering information on strategies to minimize consumption of fossil fuels.
2. John Harris announced a talk on March 13 at 7 PM in Town Hall on levels of stress experienced by cyclists on streets throughout the Boston area. All streets in Brookline have been classified. Furth is a professor at Northeastern. He is a former Brookline resident and former member of the Brookline Transportation Board.
3. John Harris also provided information about Climate Action week, the fourth week in March. The week will start with a lecture by Russel Preston on Tactics and Strategy in Urban Design on Monday, March 27 at 6:15 PM in Hunneman Hall in the Main Library.
4. Street lighting meeting with DPW. Frank and Susan Granoff met with DPW administrators Andrew Pappastergion, Peter Ditto, Todd Kirrane, and Tom Brady on February 1 to discuss the results of our street light assessment work done in the fall of 2016. Frank asked for attention to Winchester Street between the Senior Center and Beacon Street. On that street, mature trees block the street lighting. Winchester Street has the brighter new lights. One remedial option is to attach a second light fixture to poles. The supplementary fixtures would be lower than the current fixtures and would direct their light at the sidewalk. Frank also asked for attention to Beacon Street between St. Mary's and Coolidge Corner. That area also has mature street trees and widely-spaced utility poles. Some of the light fixtures are in the median strip. DPW will hold off on analyzing that section because it is currently served by older light fixtures. The newer lights will be installed soon. We will reassess that area after the lights have been installed and the trees leaf out.  
Tom Brady reported that the Town Arborist had address a majority of the street-tree-street lighting conflicts through pruning. We have reason to check these streets again after the tress have leafed out.
5. On February 8 we cosponsored a forum on the Town's new trash collection system. Our partner was the Council on Aging. Staff representatives of DPW were present to explain

the new system. Participants were able to see the new toters. Approximately 25 people attended the session. John Dempsey also spoke on behalf the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

6. We will sponsor an election forum on Monday, April 24. The forum will be held at the Senior Center from 4 to 6 PM. Candidates for Board of Selectmen will be invited. We do not know whether the forum will include candidates for the Library Board and the School Committee. Carol Seibert and Roberta Winitzer volunteered to help in planning the forum. Frank hopes that others will volunteer to help. We will need to communicate with candidates, establish guidelines for the forum, find a moderator, and publicize the forum.
7. LCAC and the Education committee will sponsor an educational program on creative use of extra space in housing on June 1. Len Fishman of the UMass Gerontology Institute will be the main speaker.
8. Susan Granoff reported that the Property Tax relief committee has met twice. To date, the committee has focused on reviewing background information.
9. Henry Winkelman reported that the committee on the Kent-Station Street affordable senior housing proposal has met twice. At its most recent meeting, the committee learned that DPW is not aware of any impediments to building on the site. DPW is very familiar with the site because it prepared the site to become a parking lot.
10. Our guest was Donna Murphy, a member of the Newton Council on Aging and a member of the Council's senior housing subcommittee. Donna spoke on accessory dwelling unit options in Newton. For 20 years Newton has had an ordinance permitting accessory dwelling units. The ADUs were allowed only on very large lots (25,000 square feet or more). In 20 years, only 73 ADUs were built. In Newton. The ordinance specifies that ADUs must be owner occupied. No new entrance that faces the street may be constructed. The homes with ADUs cannot be occupied by more than 3 unrelated individuals. (This is the same limit that applies to all homes in Newton.) The Newton ordinance does not address parking. Each unit must have at least two modes of egress.

Newton is considering a new ordinance that would allow ADUs in homes regardless of size. The maximize size of the ADU would be 25% of the size of the home. ADUs would be permitted only in homes that are at least 5 years old. (The aim is to discourage developers from trying to bypass zoning in neighborhoods zoned for single-family homes.

The driving force in advocacy for ADUs in Newton is the need for affordable housing. Another concern is the safety hazards associated with illegal apartments. Newton is estimated to have over 1,000 illegal apartments.

The cost of constructing an ADU will limit the numbers. The estimated cost of an ADU is approximately \$100,000.

Lexington has been the leader in permitting ADUs. Lexington has an ADU ordinance with minimal restrictions. Since the ordinance has been put in place, the number of ADUs constructed has been modest.

Roger Blood reported on the State legislation on ADUs that is pending. The state may pass a law requiring municipalities to allow ADUs. The legislation passed the Senate last year. The session ended before the House could consider the proposal. Roger expects the legislative proposal to pass. Roger reported that the Housing Advisory Board is supportive of the proposed state legislation.

Donna circulated criteria for age-friendly housing prepared by the Newton CoA housing subcommittee. She also reported on a senior housing guide for Newton that is patterned on our Guide to Residential Buildings with Elevators. Newton has many fewer elevator buildings than Brookline. The Newton guide is 60 pages. The guide will soon be available to the public.

Next meeting: Monday, April 3 at 3 PM.