

# Brookline Community Aging Network

## *Livable Community Advocacy Committee*

### **Notes**

September 25, 2017

Attendance: Alex Beck, Frank Caro, Harvey Cohen, Jerry Feuer, John Harris, Irving Kurki, Susan Granoff, Joan McCabe, Elaine Mountleigh, Carol Seibert, Vera Sharma, Ruthann Snyder, Ann Stitt, Matt Weiss, and Jackie Wright,

Guests: Officer Pat Elwood, BPD, Noah Fasten, David Kroop, David Trevvett, and Noah Fasten

**Electric bicycle and tricycle demonstration.** The meeting was preceded by demonstrations of electric bicycles and tricycles. John Harris arranged for members to have an opportunity to learn about these vehicles that have electric wheels.

**Pedestrian and bicycle safety.** Irving Kurki led a wide-ranging discussion covering concerns of both pedestrians and cyclists. The following are among the themes emphasized by various speakers:

Irving Kurki emphasized two points: safety for cyclists on the streets can be improved 1) by reducing motorists' speed, adding bicycle lanes, and protected bicycle paths where possible and 2) encouraging bicyclists to overcome their hesitation to bicycle in the street through participating in organized or informal group rides. If the streets are safer and cyclists have greater confidence in their ability to ride in traffic, we can reduce the number of bicyclists on the sidewalks.

Matt Weiss. Intersections can be challenging for pedestrians because cyclists can appear with little notice. Cyclists may also be moving at high speed.

Officer Elwood: The Police Department has been attending to cyclists on sidewalks in commercial areas. On a recent day, four officers were stationed in Coolidge Corner for a few hours. When the officers stop cyclists, they mostly issue warning. Officer Elwood sees a need for more public education.

David Kroop: We need infrastructure improvements that separate cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists from one another.

Ruthann Snyder expects the newly formed Pedestrian Advisory committee to play a constructive role in assuring that pedestrian concerns are addressed in both real estate

development and traffic projects. David Trevvett, a member of the Pedestrian Advisory committee, spoke about the contribution that the committee hopes to make.

Joan McCabe spoke about the contribution of the “Dutch reach” in preventing dooring. When drivers open door using their right arm, the pivot to see approaching bicycles. Joan is arranging for Michael Charney, an advocate for the Dutch Reach, to speak on the method at a future meeting.

Jerry Feuer: Many of the right of ways in Brookline do not include enough space to allow for bicycle tracks or bike lanes. Jerry recommends more one-way streets.

Susan Granoff raised a concern about the severity of injuries to pedestrians when they are hit by bicycles.

Vera Sharma expressed concern about pedestrian conflict with automobiles at corners when signals allow autos to turn right or left while pedestrians are crossing. Vera also recommends that the option of turning right on “red” be eliminated at some intersections because of the threat to pedestrians.

John Harris: Brookline has adopted a Complete Streets policy. Transportation projects are now supposed to consider the needs of all users. The most vulnerable users are supposed to get special attention.

We thanked Officer Elwood for participating in the discussion. We will continue the discussion at future meetings.

**Warrant articles on property tax relief for seniors.** The committee voted unanimously to support the following articles on the November 2017 Town Meeting warrant:

Article 6. Ask the Legislature to increase the income ceiling for senior eligibility for the senior tax deferral program

Article 7. Reduce the interest rate charged to those who participate in the property tax deferral program

Article 8. Establish a fund to allow a taxation aid committee to assist seniors and others with disabilities that have special difficulties in paying property taxes

**Feedback on annual meeting.** Next year, the committee will attend to its table at the annual meeting. This year Frank Caro failed to bring materials and arrange for members to be present to explain the work of the committee.

**Topics for future meetings.** Matt Weiss proposed a meeting on building heights permitted by Brookline zoning. Matt supports relaxation of the code to permit taller buildings.

**Recommended presentation.** Stacey Beuttell of WalkBoston will present a talk entitled “Walkability: More than the Ability Walk” at Town Hall on Wednesday, October 11 at 7:00 PM in room 111. The talk is sponsored by the Pedestrian Advisory committee. A

**Future Meetings:**

Monday, October 23

Monday, December 4

Monday, January 8