

Brookline Community Aging Network

Livable Community Advocacy Committee

Notes

April 27, 2015

Attendance: Mellissa Trevvitt, Roberta Winitzer, Peter Ames, Matt Weiss, Henry Winkelman, Jerry Small, Susan Granoff, Elaine Mountleigh, Jane Gould, Joan McCabe, Ruthann Sneider, Frank Caro, Sara Slymon (Library Director), and Janet Selcer (ReServe BrooklineCAN Seniors in public housing initiative).

1. **Brookline Library director Sara Slymon spoke about the Future of Community Libraries.** The topic is particularly pertinent because the Brookline library board is considering an upgrading of the Coolidge Corner branch library. The current building may be remodeled or replaced by a new building. Sara gave many examples of the diverse services that are being offered by contemporary libraries. These services include: three-dimensional printing, “way-finding” in libraries (to help patrons find material and services within the library), better signage, expanded arts and crafts programs, lending collections of heirloom seeds, lending collection of cake pans and other kitchen equipment, interactive exhibits, exercise classes, mobile services, community meeting spaces, individual study rooms, teleconference space, and roof gardens.

We had an extensive discussion with Ms. Slymon. The following are among the points that came out in the discussion. Planning for the future at Coolidge will take into account the fact that the building currently houses 117,000 but was built for only 60,000. There is reason to expand seating in the building. Currently the building offers only 63 reader seats. Seating for 300 would be desirable. Some patrons are looking for quiet spaces. Others are seeking meeting rooms. The planning for the Coolidge Branch is in the very early stages. No information is available on how much the project will cost and how it will be funded. The Brookline libraries have three alternate sources of funds: trust funds administered by the Board, a foundation, and the Friends of the Library. The biggest challenge for the Library Director is advocacy for spending on technology. Library staff members are available to help patrons learn technology. Library planning is now typically short range because technology is evolving rapidly in unpredictable ways. The Brookline Libraries have a service that delivers materials to home-bound seniors. The service needs to be publicized more effectively.

Under Ms. Slymon's leadership, the library has begun to offer innovative services. One example is a bikemobile that will bring book collections to various locations in town during the summer months.

2. **Janet Selcer** reported on the project she is conducting through ReServe focused on **seniors living in Brookline's Senior Housing Developments** operated by the Brookline Housing Authority. The purpose of the project is to engage seniors living in senior public housings developments in Brookline in advocacy on Brookline livability issues. We hope that some additional seniors in public housing will join LCAC. (Elaine Mountleigh is already a resident of senior housing who is a LCAC committee member.) The funding for Janet's work comes from Jewish Family and Children Services. Janet began her work in January. She has established relationships with administrators and service coordinators at the five buildings (Morse (Longwood,) Sussman (Pleasant Street), O'Shea (Park Street), and Kickham\Col. Flloyd). Janet has circulated flyers in the buildings to attract residents to the meetings. Janet has held four meetings (with refreshments) at the buildings. Frank attended each of the meetings to explain BrooklineCAN and LCAC In each case, attendance at the meeting has been adequate. Useful ideas emerged at each of the meetings about pedestrian safety and transportation issues. Janet has started neighborhood sidewalk safety outings around the Senior Housing developments. Henry Winkelman is assisting Janet. Henry is taking pictures. He is also helping with documentation. Later, a DPW administrator will be asked to meet with the residents to listen to reports on pedestrian safety issues.

The meetings have brought to light problems with transportation from one senior housing development to another. There are also complaints about transportation to the Senior Center. Residents of Senior Housing seem uninformed about the Elder bus. For most of the residents who have attended meetings, the Senior Center is considered to be beyond walking distance.

Janet asked that a future LCAC meeting be held at one of the senior developments. The committee agreed without a formal vote. Janet also is seeking additional volunteers from the committee to help on future neighborhood sidewalk safety walks. Joan McCabe and Susan Granoff have expressed interest in participating in future walks.

3. The **BrooklineCAN election forum** will be held on Thursday, April 30 at 4 PM. Members are asked to bring two friends with them to the forum.

4. The MA Dept. of Transportation has approved funding for our **travel advisory demonstration**. The project is likely to begin in August. We will receive about \$57,000 in first-year funding. We are aiming for a 3 year demonstration.

5. The **next meeting will be on Monday, June 1**. The next meeting will be held at a senior public housing development to be determined. Our guest will be Kara Brewton, the Town's economic development coordinator. She will be speaking about proposed changes in sidewalks and parking on Harvard Street in Coolidge Corner.