

# Brookline Community Aging Network

## *Livable Community Advocacy Committee*

### **Notes**

June 29, 2015

Attendance: Susan Granoff, Janet Selcer, Matt Weiss, Roberta Winitzer, Melissa Trevvett, Elaine Mountleigh, Henry Winkelman, Frank Caro, Alison Steinfeld, and other guests who are residents of the Morse Apartments.

The meeting was held in the community room at the Morse Apartments at 90 Longwood Ave.

Our guest was Alison Steinfeld, Director of the Brookline Department of Planning and Community Development. We discussed zoning and development of new housing for seniors in Brookline. Town Meeting has approved a study that will be conducted in the 2016 fiscal year of all Town-owned properties. The project will identify possibilities for reuse of some of the properties. Among the options considered will be use of air rights above town-owned parking lots for senior housing. The study will also consider reuse of properties for other uses including construction of public schools.

Another study will be proposed to Town Meeting for the 2017 fiscal year to examine rezoning of some large parcels in South Brookline. These parcels are currently zoned for large single family homes, that is, one acre or more. The parcels include Pine Manor College, Allendale Farm, and the Bournemouth Hospital. If and when these parcels become available for other uses, various competing possibilities are likely. From the Town's perspective, options other than large single-family homes may be preferable. Open space advocates, for example, will propose that they be used for parks. Housing developers may be interested in cluster developments. These parcels may be also suitable for continuing care retirement communities that provide shuttle transportation services for residents. Alison Steinfeld recommends that we participate in the public process when the study is conducted to urge consideration of zoning that would permit a continuing care retirement community. We also discussed other potential locations for new housing for seniors in Brookline. We discussed the advantage of housing that is close to public transportation and commercial areas. Ms. Steinfeld reported that Congregation Kehillath Israel of Brookline is considering a senior housing development on the site of its school on Harvard Street. The project would be carried out in junction with Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly. (Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly currently offers service-supported housing for seniors in Newton, Framingham, and Brighton.)

Janet Selcer provided an update on the pedestrian safety project she is conducting with residents of the Brookline Housing Authority's senior housing developments. A meeting is planned for June 30 with representatives of the Department of Public Works. The findings of a pedestrian audit of sidewalks and streets near the housing developments will be presented. Residents of the developments will request an action plan to address the problems.

Melissa Trevvett reported that a cable television license renewal hearing for Comcast will be held at the Senior Center on July 22 at 3 PM. Comcast is Brookline's major cable television supplier. Matt, Roberta, and Henry are interested in testifying on behalf of BIG because Comcast is a major source of funds for BIG. Both Melissa and Frank are serving on the committee that is reviewing the Comcast license renewal. The hearing provides an opportunity for any resident to be heard on a concern about cable television services provided by Comcast.

Shirley Selhub is seeking volunteers who will help her in preparing the transportation resource guide for the STRAITS project. Shirley hopes to have the guide available in the early fall. The guide will cover various travel resources available to those who do not drive in Brookline and Newton. Interested members may contact Shirley.

Susan proposed a topic for a future meeting: What seniors should do to prepare for health care emergencies in their residences. We will explore the expertise and resources of the Health, Fire, and Police departments to find a speaker. The presentation will focus on seniors who live in buildings that lack organized initiatives to address needs of seniors in crisis.

Susan also recommends a future project concerned with adequacy of street lighting. The Town is in the process of upgrading street lighting. Nevertheless, lighting is inadequate in some places, especially when trees are leafed out. Frank recommends a project involving observation of sidewalks at night in neighborhoods with high senior density. Observers might use light meters to establish illumination levels on a scientific basis. We might want to do the observations in late summer or early fall to take advantage of early nightfall and warm temperatures.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, July 27 at 11 AM in room 111 in Town Hall. Park and Open Space Director Erin Gallentine will be our guest.

Notes prepared by Frank Caro