

BrooklineCAN Steering Committee

Notes

November 18, 2015

Attendance: Peter Ames, Lisa Berger, Carol Caro, Frank Caro, Ruthann Dobek, Karen Fischer, Marsha Frankel, Michelle LaPointe, Elenore Parker, John Seay, Ruth Seidman, Molly Turlish, Matt Weiss. Guest: Kerri Ann Tester.

Update on the TRIPPS program (formerly STRAITS). Kerri Ann Tester, director, presented an update on Transportation Resources, Information, Planning, and Partnership for Seniors. To accomplish the goal of having resources listed online and in print along with educational outreach, the initial focus is on recruiting and training volunteers to research what is available and to be trained in options so they can coach (as Transit Advisors or TAs). Currently, three TA volunteers have been recruited, with a goal of six by year's end. Ruthann mentioned that they are considering outreach to lawyers who do estate planning so that planning for transportation without driving can be included in the discussions; Michelle confirmed that such outreach would be valuable to lawyers. Sponsors of the program are BrooklineCAN, Brookline Council on Aging, Newton Council on Aging, and the Brookline Senior Center. To reach Kerri, call (617) 730-2644 or email TRIPPS@brooklinema.gov.

Hiring a part-time membership assistant. Ruthann said that notice of the position has been featured on the website, in an email blast, and in the newsletter. A number of responses have come in, and Ruthann is interviewing.

Volunteer opportunities website. The Communications Committee reviewed the website on volunteer opportunities put together by Alberta Lipson and others, with the temporary address of <http://taylorklickstein.com/brooklineCAN/>. The Communications Committee recommended to the Steering Committee that we ask Alberta's team to (1) create an independent domain name, (2) change the title on the database from "Brookline Community Aging Network" to something about volunteer opportunities (without including our organizational name or logo), and (3) take responsibility for keeping the data up to date. Once these three conditions are met, we would host the database through GoDaddy and offer a link to the database on our site. The Steering Committee decided to follow the recommendations and thanked Alberta's team for their work. Frank and Ruthann will communicate the conditions and opportunities to Alberta.

Checklist re: Publicizing BrooklineCAN events. Molly shared the draft checklist she developed at Frank's request. She reviewed the guidelines and form adopted at the April Steering Committee meeting and consulted with members of the Communications Committee to produce a five-item checklist. Various members of the Communications Committee who serve on the Steering Committee made requests for breaking out options and setting different deadlines. The Communications Committee will work on the checklist.

Proposal to purchase YakTrax in bulk. Susan Granoff, a Town Meeting Member and an active member of the Livable Communities Advocacy Committee, is a committed pedestrian who highly recommends the use of YakTrax to prevent falls while walking on ice. Concerns about endorsing one product among several designed for similar purposes and about liability if someone should be injured while wearing the product prompted the Steering Committee to decline to promote YakTrax.

Treasurer's report. Our usual fall deficit has shrunk significantly – from \$ (2,248.50) October 20 to \$ (585.50) as of November 17 – thanks to memberships coming in and to a lack of expenses paid. So far this fiscal year, membership donations total \$5,035, and expenses, \$5,618.50, and the current balance on hand equals \$20,168.

Education. At a November 23rd meeting, the Committee will review a long list of potential educational programs, including one on pedestrian safety in winter months that was suggested during the discussion of YakTrax (above). A flyer format, using the information for the April 11 program on “Selling the Fountain of Youth” will be reviewed by the Communications Committee.

Membership. Today, we have 396 active members. Numbers tend to be volatile at this time of year because November, December, and the early months of each year are months with many renewals due. The Committee's November 2 meeting included Carol presenting the online guides to residential buildings with elevators. A discussion of what we mean when we say that BrooklineCAN is a membership organization and thus who do we count as members was introduced by Matt sharing the increase in financial support experienced by a synagogue that separated membership from required donations. Once the Committee discusses further, a recommendation may come to the Steering Committee. At the December 9 meeting, Susan Granoff and Joan McCabe will talk about the pedestrian safety project involving residents of public housing (see LCAC notes below).

Communications. The December newsletter will continue the series on transportation. An article on membership renewal dates was suggested for the newsletter, and a possibility of offering gift memberships in connection with Valentine's Day was suggested. A year-end promotion of gift memberships in 2014 led to a few gift memberships.

Professional Service Providers Group (PSPG). At a meeting in October, PSPG reunited and prepared for a December 10 meeting on how to work with clients with hearing loss and limited or no vision.

Repairs and referrals. The project lacks volunteers. Molly suggested simplifying the listing of contractors, paired with guidance on questions to ask (available on the website now). If listing a contractor needed only a recommendation by one of more members plus completing a simple questionnaire, the process might be simplified and the list made more current and thus more useful.

Livable Community Advocacy Committee. Frank reported on the follow-up to the pedestrian safety project begun last spring while Janet Selcer was a JF&CS –supported Reservist. She recognized the need to involve members of the LCAC in the organizing of residents of public housing. Susan Granoff and Joan McCabe are continuing the project, and worked to prepare for a follow-up meeting November 2nd. The progress report noted numerous small improvements as well as the rebuilding of a sidewalk on Auburn Street that provides access to grocery shopping for residents of O’Shea House, one of the Housing Authority’s senior developments. Representatives of all five senior public housing buildings attended, about a dozen people in all. Making it possible for residents of public housing to see that their advocacy makes a difference is rewarding, and Frank spoke about the results so far with Melvin Kleckner, the Town administrator. The next follow-up meeting with the Department of Public Works is planned for May. We will seek press coverage of the project.

The next meeting, November 30, focuses on a Complete Streets policy proposal, especially the impact on seniors.

Age Friendly City Initiative. The next program on BIG TV features an interview with Chris Chanysulkit on exercise, health, nutrition, and the Lego display at Town Hall. Matt announced that the program might be delayed because Roberta Winitzer is having surgery for a broken arm.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 16, at 3:00 PM.

Notes prepared by Molly Turlish