

BrooklineCAN Steering Committee

Notes

March 19, 2014

Attendance: Peter Ames, Ruthann Dobek, Molly Turlish, Laura Baber, John Seay, Kathy Burnes, Karen Zweig, Elenore Parker, Jamie Donchin, and Frank Caro

Jamie Donchin was introduced as a new staff member at the Council on Aging. Jamie will be working with the Repair and Referrals committee.

Sustaining Membership proposal. The membership committee is recommending that we offer a 3-year membership option at slightly reduced rates (\$65 for individuals, \$110 for households). We unanimously agreed to support the proposal; however, we are concerned about implementation. We will have to change all of our publicity about costs of membership. We will also need to make changes in on-line payment arrangements. We will also have to adjust the membership data base. Molly and John will work on implementation issues and provide a progress report at the April meeting. We hope to announce the availability of 3-year memberships at the annual meeting in September.

“Monthly” meeting proposal. Molly reported on the Membership committee’s discussion of Karen Fischer’s proposal for regular membership meetings. The committee recommends that regular membership meetings will be attractive to members but the Membership committee does not have the capacity to organize these meetings. The Membership committee proposes that a program committee be established with members drawn from each of the current committees. The Membership committee proposes that we hold 4 or 5 member meetings of this kind each year. Some meetings would be held at the Senior Center; others would be held at other locations.

While we continue to find the program meeting concept attractive, we are concerned about who will provide leadership for this initiative. Frank, Molly, and Kathy will approach a member who is well qualified to take on this assignment. We discussed

various aspects of the proposal including the frequency of these programs, the relationship to the annual meeting, and the time of day at which we are most likely to be able to attract members. We also discussed the role of refreshments in attracting participants. We also discussed the relative merits of regularly scheduled events and “pop ups,” that is, spontaneously organized events.

BrooklineCAN sponsorship of slippery sidewalk warrant article. Frank reported that the Livable Community Advocacy Committee has submitted a warrant article calling for proactive enforcement of the Town’s bylaw on snow removal from sidewalks in commercial areas. This is the first warrant article submitted on behalf of BrooklineCAN. The article was approved by a vote of the LCAC. The committee did not seek approval from the Steering committee.

We decided that it is acceptable for the committee to submit warrant articles without Steering Committee approval. The Steering Committee voted unanimously to support the slippery sidewalk proposal. Laura reported that Center Communities residents may want to sign a petition supporting the proposal.

Membership data base. John reported that the membership data base is proving useful in providing information about members. The disadvantage of the current ACCESS-based system is that information is awkward to share. Some consideration has been given to moving to a web-based data base. The exploration has been put on hold.

Volunteer data base. John has met recently with Alberta Lipson about the possibility of developing a web-based data base for volunteer opportunities. Alberta is working with the REAP program to develop a volunteer clearing house that would serve not only BrooklineCAN members but the larger community. Alberta’s information is currently in an Excel format.

Kathy reported that **Grant Maker’s in Aging (GIA)** is conducting an age-friendly photography contest. Ruthann will pass the information along to Jean Stringham. GIA does not recognize Brookline or BrooklineCAN in spite of our participation in the WHO age-friendly initiative. Kathy will try get us recognized.

The **Nominating committee and the Annual Meeting committee** will both be holding initial meetings soon.

Education committee. The March program on substance abuse was well attended and well received. On April 16 the committee is cosponsoring a presentation by Massachusetts Senior Action on advocacy. On May 15, the committee is sponsoring a panel discussion on elder care. The panel will be moderated by Elder Affairs Secretary Anne Hartstein. We had a lively discussion about a flyer that has been distributed promoting the event. Our communications committee is concerned that BrooklineCAN sponsorship is not adequately specified on the flyer. From a membership perspective, it is important that we remind members frequently that we are adding value. We discussed the challenges in developing the flyer and discussed other strategies that will be used to promote the event. We also discussed the merits of the timing. The event will be held between 6 and 8 PM. Light refreshments will be offered. The timing is a compromise. Many of our members are adverse to night meetings. At the same time, we want to reach people who are working. The meeting will be held during the time when most people eat dinner. Light refreshments do not replace dinner.

We agreed that the Communications committee should develop a template that the Education committee can use for flyers that promote educational programs.

Finance. Ruthann reminded committee chairs that budget proposals for fiscal year 2015 are due on March 31.

We are soliciting proposals for modest program expenditures (\$500 to \$2000). We want to spend funds in a way that provides us with visibility. Laura recommended that we spend some of the available funds on a public event that celebrates Brookline's participation in the WHO Age-Friendly Cities program. Laura is encouraged to develop this proposal. (Frank will pursue it with the Age-Friendly City committee which is also interested in a public event.) Another idea is to sponsor one stipend for the proposed pilot of a stipended volunteer program for renters. The cost would be \$1000. Other proposals are welcome.

Professional Services Committee. At its April 10 meeting, the professional Services committee will hear from Ruthann, Molly, and Frank. The meeting will be held at the Senior Center. The aim will be to engage committee members in a BrooklineCAN project. One of the options is development of an age-friendly business program. That program would replace the discount program that we recently retired. Karen, Molly, Ruthann, and Frank have some planning to do to be sure that they offer a short list of good ideas to the attendees.

Livable Community Advocacy Committee. At its March 24 meeting, the committee will host a rare public appearance by Fire Department Chief, Paul Ford. Everyone is welcome to attend.

One of the committee's efforts is to obtain Town funding for a stipended volunteer program for renters. Funding for a pilot was not included in the Town Administrator's budget. The committee is supporting an effort to persuade the Advisory committee to add the funds to the budget. It may be necessary to propose a budget amendment at Town Meeting.

Repair and Referrals. Jamie reported that she is reactivating the committee.

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 16 at 3:00 PM

Notes prepared by Frank Caro