

Brookline Community Aging Network

Livable Community Advocacy Committee

Notes

November 26, 2018

Attendance: Frank Caro, Harvey Cohen, Susan Cohen, Susan Granoff, Lydia Kaufman, Carol Siebert, Vera Sharma, Ann Stitt, David Trevett, Melissa Trevett, Matt Weiss, and Asaya Zimbov

Street lighting for pedestrians. Frank is proposing submission of a warrant article to the Spring Town Meeting calling for a Select Board committee to consider a program to extend the Town's pedestrian-friendly street lighting. A committee will provide a forum for determining the extent of demand for pedestrian-friendly street lighting, extent of opposition, streets that should be given priority, technical considerations, compatibility with street trees, and long-term financing through the Town's Capital Improvement Program. Frank reviewed the background including the Town's reliance on highway lighting, the appreciation of walkability in some portions of Brookline, the committee's past work in surveying the adequacy of street lighting for pedestrians, the inadequate response from DPW, and the precedent in Brookline for good pedestrian lighting on Harvard Street and the commercial areas on Beacon Street. Susan Granoff called attention to the importance of having a supportive Select Board representative on the committee. Matt Weiss called attention to the fact that adequacy of street lighting is a part of the Complete Streets agenda. Frank will seek to recruit a Select Board member. Frank will circulate a draft warrant article early in 2019.

Benches along the sidewalks. The DPW Engineering Division is now willing to approve specific locations where it will allow benches along sidewalks. Further, the Town will install privately financed benches for a price of \$3,500 per bench. On a long-term basis, we have been seeking some benches on Beacon Street between the commercial areas. Particularly helpful would be benches near medical office buildings at both Powell and Hawes Street. Frank is hopeful that some private financing can be found. Eventually, Complete Streets may provide some financing.

Public land at the Harvard Street and Stearns Road intersection provides another opportunity for one or two benches. The space currently has 3 street trees. One of the trees is set into a "volcano." The land is 10 feet wide, more than enough for a standard 4-foot bench. Frank has initiated discussion with the Parks and Open Space Division.

We had a wide-ranging discussion of benches including the merits of benches, the mixed views of merchants about benches in front of their businesses, and speculation about reasons why some benches in commercial areas have been removed.

Kent-Station Street senior affordable housing proposal. The study committee for this project will be meeting later this week to discuss public comment on a draft request for proposals. The committee is likely to ask the Select Board to issue the request for proposals.

Property Tax Deferral Program. Governor Baker recently signed off on a home-rule petition that increases the annual qualifying income limit for participation the Senior Property Tax Deferral Program in Brookline from \$57,000 per year to \$86,000 per year.

Matt reported that Age-Friendly Television's most recent show is concerned with property tax relief for seniors. Assessor Gary McCabe appeared on the show. A link to the show is available on the BrooklineCAN website.

Susan Granoff provided a thorough report on the current Moderator's committee on property tax relief. The committee is planning a survey to learn about need for stronger property tax relief issues.

Locations in Brookline for recreational marijuana dispensaries. Carol Seibert provided an overview of the status of efforts to establish recreational marijuana dispensaries in Brookline. Five dispensaries have been proposed in North Brookline. At the outset, Brookline will have no more than four dispensaries. A public process is underway to provide public information and identify neighborhood concerns. The dispensaries will be subject to extensive public regulation.

Next meeting: Monday January 7 at 3 PM.

Notes prepared by Frank Caro