

BrooklineCAN Steering Committee

Notes

February 18, 2015

Attendance: Peter Ames, Kathy Burnes, Carol Caro, Frank Caro, Ruthann Dobek, Elenore Parker, John Seay, Ruth Seidman, Molly Turlish, and Matthew Weiss. Also attending were Intern Rachel Ann Wickstein and ReServist / Fellow Janet Selcer.

Repair and Referrals. Jamie Donchin, the social worker responsible for staffing Repairs and Referrals, reported on the history and status of the program. The need for a useful list of contractors and other service providers was identified in the original planning for BrooklineCAN as a gap in service. Providers submit a one-page applications along with proof of insurance and licensure, and volunteer committee members have gathered important information to make the list fully vetted. In addition to putting together the online list of 21 providers in a range of categories, the committee has sponsored two educational workshops. Sixty potential service providers, including some in new categories, have been fully or partially screened. Volunteer committee members have dropped out for various reasons, leaving issues including: (1) how to counteract the attrition of volunteers, (2) how to increase the interest of service providers in doing what is necessary to be listed, and (3) how to increase the use of the online list. All three issues are similarly affecting the Newton program. Kathy suggested that BrooklineCAN consider listing open positions on Volunteer Match with a headline such as “Be part of a program development team” (see the website <http://www.volunteermatch.org/search?l=Boston%2C+MA%2C+USA>). We will add a check-box about getting involved to the Membership Form. Matt, Carol, and John will work with Jamie to plan a way forward.

Organizing Residents of Public Housing. ReServist and Fellow Janet Selcer spoke briefly about the project she is working on to organize seniors living in public housing to advocate for making Brookline an even more livable community. She brings to the project extensive experience with the Brookline housing authority and is pleased to have the opportunity to focus on seniors, who represent 80 percent of the residents in the five complexes she is working with. She is planning gatherings to attract more active seniors and a questionnaire to measure interests.

Travel Advisory Center. After submitting a letter of intent to Tufts Health Plan Foundation to support the creation of a travel advisory center, Frank learned that the Massachusetts Department of Transportation administers federal funds in a Community Transit Grant program that seems a good fit for our proposal. Frank and others are working to complete the challenging application, which is due March 2. If successful, a full-time staff member would be engaged to work with Brookline and Newton on setting up and carrying out a project to advise seniors and others who are transitioning from driving to other modes of transportation. The goal is to create a model that could be implemented state-wide.

Annual Meeting. Frank requests members from the Membership and Communications Committees to join the Annual Meeting Committee, which will begin its work March 12 to prepare

for the September 17 event. Molly said that Karen Fischer and Shirley Partoll from the Membership Committee will serve (Shirley needs transportation to and from the Senior Center). Henry Winkelman will represent the Livable Communities Advocacy Committee, and Frank was encouraged to invite at least one more member from that large and active committee.

Membership. We have 333 active (paid) members today, up 11 since the January meeting. Personal emails from Carol and Frank along with personalized emails from the entire Steering Committee to former members whose renewal date fell on August 31, 2014 or earlier have been effective, leading to 21 renewals so far. We may still see additional renewals from this effort since many people are away in the winter. Emails to 22 members with March 2015 renewal dates were sent this morning to encourage renewals before memberships expire. Working with staff of The Conversation Project, the planning team headed by Judith Kidd has identified a speaker for a membership event in early May. Molly is working to determine a site and date, and Ruthann reminded us to avoid May 14, the date of the Health Fair.

Education. Upcoming programs include (1) March 23rd, Anita Hoffer will speak at Hunneman Hall at the Main Library on “Embracing Your Sexuality”; (2) March 26 (late breaking news) at 7 pm, the film “I’ll Be Me” about Glen Campbell’s experience with Alzheimer’s will be shown at the Coolidge Corner Theater; free tickets will be available through sponsors, and 144 tickets will be available for sale; sponsors will be able to provide literature to the audience, but there will be no speaking program; (3) May 14, health fair co-sponsored with Center Communities and Brookline Health Department.

Communications. The March newsletter is nearly done. The committee approved creating a template for fliers about educational programs, but the designer has not been available to work on it. Harvey Braverman is launching a new website that should be a good opportunity to post news and announcements about BrooklineCAN.

Livable Community Advocacy Committee. Frank commented that this winter has demonstrated the value of working on slippery sidewalks. The Town has been more effective in enforcing the bylaw that requires landowners to remove snow promptly from sidewalks (even though the most recent storm has put everyone over the edge). The major question is what will be proposed by the Town Administrator to make improvements in the future, particularly in terms of human resources to clear town-owned sidewalks.

Finance. Budget requests for the 2015-16 fiscal year are due March 31st. So far this fiscal year, expenses total \$5,663 and income, \$10,580. Funds on hand 2/17/15 total \$21,313.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 18 at 3:00 PM.

Notes prepared by Molly Turkish