

BrooklineCAN Retreat – Day 2

January 29, 2021

Opportunities - Leadership, Advocacy, Communication, Membership

Many opportunities to consider. In the shorter term and on a personal level, what would I be willing to spend my time on? Housing

Recruit more people to recruit more people to take leadership roles. Virtual meetings need to be a venue for spreading influence. Virtual gives us a much better opportunity to speak up and identify from BrooklineCAN

General overview comment. There are the things BCAN is well positioned to do (e.g., information through newsletter, PR, website, building awareness) and particular issues we could focus on (E.g. Advocacy, representing senior population to town decision makers and town in general). We should ensure that our general practices go on as well as focus on specific issues this coming year.

Broad goals and specific target activities. Emphasis on CAN action is important. Easier to recruit people for specific goal/activity. We on screening committee are interested on broad, long term, long range philosophy and target. Many people are more short term in thinking and activity. Fisher Hill area and other areas of town where seniors are underserved (e.g., west of Washington Street) and use of Newbury College gives us a prime opportunity to be proactive. Might offer a way to engage people.

One of the things Frank pushed was pedestrian friendly street lighting. Do not want to let this die. We need to push that forward.

There is a leadership void around the age friendly committee. Need to work select board. Sometimes it feels like herding cats to get town departments, etc. to respond.

Seniors are 20 percent of the town population and are not getting their money's worth.

Important distinction between what is part of town and what is part of governmental structure; age friendly is associated with a specific committee; if we make it our focus it blurs things.

Only thing age friendly committee does it make a connection to things that can be funded by government – like signs that say “age-friendly Brookline”.

At the very least we should be communicating with everyone on age friendly committee.

Matt will send list of age-friendly committee members.

Tease apart relationships of various organizations/committees (e.g., Age Friendly, Senior Center, Council on Aging, Livable Communities Action Committee)

Incredible interrelationship of all activities seen in age friendly report; multiple departments can take credit for the same work. Redundancy and communication can be helpful around advocacy and communication.

Networking and creating community. Continued work of communication committee has focused on this. Zoom and combo of physical and Zoom will be what every organization is leaning towards.

Open meeting law was suspended by Gov. Baker to allow for virtual meetings. Advocate for the ability to continue meeting virtually.

We are very strong around advocacy and communication; we would be able to recruit people to work on specific things such as Newbury College, etc.

Need to tackle issue of membership; increase raw numbers and increase active members who are willing to do stuff.

In recruiting members, we should have a job for them to do; come up with specific proposals; one on one recruitment works well.

Frank provided a great example of the one-on-one approach. He took people out for cup of coffee to find out about their interests.

Revisit suggestion (from Day 1 retreat) on separating membership from dues paying.

Focus on a membership drive; membership should be free. By getting more members we can see who we want to recruit but we need a need a membership pool first.

Each issue area could have a leader; new structure based on projects, issues (e.g., housing), maintaining current relevant committees (e.g., communications).

Not all of the current committee structure is that functional.

We can put together ad hoc committees that focus on what we want to act on. Committees do not have to permanent.

Draw from existing pool and draw in new people. Certain structures always need to be there. Need these more permanent structures and project committees.

Before we get a committee on housing, we need to find a chair of membership and find people willing to do some work; then, building numbers; if current trend continues, we will not be here. First thing is membership.

In terms of getting of new members we have been talking about what new members can do for BrooklineCan. We should look at what we can provide – e.g., opportunity to get together like minded people to improve Brookline. If you are transitioning from working to semi-retirement, we can offer an opportunity to meet with people. What are the other things? COVID has and will continue to shape what we can and want to do. Once we are vaccinating people will have a pent-up desire to go out to do things. Opportunity for people who may be open to new groups. Opportunity to create events or organize advocacy groups and give people a reason to join. People may not be free or open to join for a few months. Position ourselves once people can join and accommodate people at that moment.

Welcoming retirees into a different social and community environment. Welcoming people into a new kind of life.

Can we be part of providing a tour of senior center and opportunities to be engaged? Newcomer event on Zoom in collaboration with Senior Center

Newcomers group (i.e., newly retired, or new to town) provides an entrée to BrooklineCAN.

How do people find out about newcomers' groups? How do we reach people who are not plugged into anything? How to reach people is hard.

Connect with realtors, have a brochure.

Captive audience at Brown House; connect with new residents there.

Need to think about the diversity of our organization in terms of members and issues we take on.

Livable communities committee work has been a strength.

Next Steps

Next Steering Committee meeting is Feb. 17th.

Carol has a couple of candidates who are interested in getting involved in something; can they come to steering committee? Absolutely. All of us should be inviting people to come.

Steering Committee leadership. What about leading the actual meetings? Can we rotate that leadership? Mixed opinions from not liking the idea to thinking it's important for different people to "try on" leadership.

Let a person lead for a few sessions. Once is not enough.

Decision is to try it quarterly.

Communications can do an article about who and what the Steering Committee is.

Elenore will co-chair steering committee meetings for three months. Involves setting agenda and notifying members as well as leading the meeting along with Ruthann.

Livable communities committee is meeting Monday; are there people who want to work on candidate forum.

Carol will lead the effort; it is an opportunity for recruiting, particularly those people who have been working on national elections who are now free to pivot. Committee needs to come up with a date and manage tasks around communication, etc. BIG will record it.

John will send out a current list of Steering Committee members.