

Brookline Community Aging Network

Livable Community Advocacy Committee

Notes

July 24, 2017

Attendance: Alex Beck, Frank Caro, Harvey Cohen, Jerry Feuer, John Harris, Susan Granoff, David Lescohier, Elaine Mountleigh, John Seay, Carol Seibert, Vera Sharma, Ann Stitt, Jackie Wright, Asaya Zimboff and Ben Vivante (guest)

1. Ben Vivante, the Town of Brookline's web master spoke about BrookOnLine and demonstrated its use. Ben explained that BrookOnLine can be used to sign up for notifications for various Town boards and commissions. BrookOnLine receives 2,500 reports each year. The most common reports are for unshoveled sidewalks and sidewalk obstruction. Street light problems are also reported frequently.

Ben explained that after filing reports, residents can expect to be notified about the status of their report. Residents should be informed when their case is opened and should be informed when it is closed. Residents should also be notified about how their concern is resolved.

Graffiti that is on public property is more likely to be removed than graffiti on private property. Police inform property owners about the graffiti do not require that property owners clean up the graffiti.

Several committee members spoke about incomplete experiences after reporting with BrookOnLine. On his smart phone, David Lescohier showed old but "open" submissions on the Town website. The reports of "unshoveled sidewalks" were submitted in the winter.

Ben encouraged follow up with individual members. His email address is bvivante@brooklinema.gov

2. Susan Granoff provided an overview of recommendations of the Senior Property Tax Relief committee. For the fall Town Meeting, the committee's effort will submit three warrant articles: One will reduce the interest rate for participants in the tax deferral program. The second will ask the State to increase the income eligibility ceiling for

participants in the tax deferral program. The third will create a fund for voluntary contributions to assist destitute seniors and others with disabilities with property tax payments. If approved, the fund will be administered by the assessor. The committee is also recommending expansion of the Property Tax Work Off program. The program currently has 30 positions. The Board of Selectmen can add more. The committee is also recommending that the ability of senior property owners to pay property taxes be revisited by another similar committee in three years. Susan spoke about the need for more information from senior property owners who are struggling financially.

3. Update on Station Street Senior Housing proposal. The committee studying the Station Streets affordable senior housing proposal is awaiting a feasibility report from the State agency that offers subsidies to affordable housing programs. The committee will not be far enough along to bring a recommendation to the fall Town Meeting.
4. A bus stop sign has been installed at the Dudley Triangle for the Northbound Route 51 bus. The stop was requested by Jerry Small four years ago.
5. Concerns about cyclists will be the main topic at our next meeting.
6. Alex Beck has volunteered to play a lead role in the project to update our guide on rest rooms open to the public. Alex may be seeking volunteers to track down specific information for the guide.
7. The Brookline Senior Center has been approached by owners of Nesterly, an app designed to bring college students who seek inexpensive housing together with “empty nesters” with extra living space in their homes. The concept is that students will provide services to compensate for reduced rents. The new service is pertinent to our interest in home sharing. We hope that Nesterly representatives will come to a future meeting so that we can present a senior perspective on the service. Jackie Wright spoke about how a similar service might be useful to older adults who were seeking a room rental at a reduced cost in exchange for service.
8. BrooklineCAN will have a table at Brookline Day on Sunday, September 24. Volunteers are needed to help with the table. Committee members who are willing to volunteer for 30 to 60 minutes should contact Frank Caro.
9. Our next meeting will be on September 25 at 3:00 PM.

Notes by Frank Caro

