

# Brookline Community Aging Network

## *Livable Community Advocacy Committee*

### **Notes**

June 4, 2018

Attendance: Carol Seibert, Matt Weiss, Susan Cohen, Ruthann Sneider, Julie Levesque, Effie Ingram, Susan Granoff, Asaya Zimbov, Rosamund Rabinowitz, Frank Caro, Michael Allen, and Sara Nelson, Guest

1. Sara Nelson spoke with us about Brookline Recreation Department Programs for seniors. Sara's multiple responsibilities for the Recreation Department include programming for seniors. She has been with the Recreation Department for four years. She is responsible for special events, including Brookline Day. She describes the programming for seniors as programs for "Active Older Adults." One of her responsibilities is for trips. Sara welcomes suggestions for destinations. Trips used to be almost exclusively for shopping. Sara now organizes only one shopping trip a year. Sara not only organizes the trips but she also drives the bus. Some trips are in a mini-bus that seats 14. Some are taken in a 12 passenger van. Larger groups (30 to 40) travel in a coach bus. All trips are day trips. Sara tries to keep costs to a minimum. She is under some pressure to cover all costs. Nevertheless, all trips involve some subsidy from the Town.

The Recreation Department is now offering pickleball at Warren Field. Sara hopes to offer pickleball this winter at the Tappan gym. We spoke about an interest in making pickleball available in North Brookline where there is a higher concentration of seniors. (We want it to be available for those who do not drive.) Underused tennis courts are a possibility. Sara is currently using basketball courts at Warren Field. She puts down tape to mark the courts that are the size of badminton courts. Ruthann Sneider envisions possibilities for pickleball on parking lots.

Frank spoke about the interest in establishing bocce in Brookline. We spoke about potential sites including the Civic Center (above the underground parking garage). Sara distributed copies of a catalog of Recreation Department offerings. Most members of the committee at the meeting disregard the catalog because they assume that the activities are only for children. The catalog has a section on programs for Active Older Adults. That section is in the rear of the catalog; it is listed in the table of contents. If we do not open the catalog, we do not see the table of contents. Members suggested some

ways in which the catalog might be changed to call greater attention to the offerings for “active older adults.”

We spoke briefly about water aerobics and swimming for adults offered at the Brookline High School pool by the Recreation Department. Sara is not involved with those popular programs

2. Susan Granoff led a discussion of Town Meeting action on the two warrant articles concerned with property tax relief for senior homeowners. Susan’s proposal would assist senior homeowners who experience difficulty in qualifying for the MA circuit breaker program because of the high property values in Brookline. Her proposal passed with almost unanimous support. Since the proposal is a home rule petition, it goes next to the Legislature for consideration. A proposal to relieve low and moderate income home owners from the obligation to pay for future overrides and debt exclusions was referred to a Moderator’s committee. The proposal generated a good deal of debate that called attention to the financial insecurity of some senior home owners. Susan has been appointed to the Moderator’s committee which will consider the proposal.
3. We discussed our proposed election forum for candidates for the “Brookline” seat in Legislature. The forum will be co-sponsored by the Council on Aging. Julie Washburn is negotiating July dates with the candidates. Susan Granoff and Ruthann Sneider volunteered to help in organizing the forum. The format for the forum will be negotiated with the candidates. Because there will be only two candidates, we will be able to give candidates more time to answer questions than was possible at our Town election forum. Michael Allen, a new Social Worker at the Council on Aging is a potential moderator for the forum. Michael is a former Legislative Aid. We plan to have some questions specifically on senior issues.
4. Members were encouraged to attend the Complete Streets Prioritization plan meeting on June 4 in the evening.
5. Members were encouraged to attend C-NAP conference on June 23 at Brandeis University. The all-day conference is free of charge and includes a free lunch. The conference provides an opportunity to learn about initiatives like BrooklineCAN in other communities in MA.
6. Our next meeting will probably be held at 90 Longwood Ave. in response to a request from residents of Brookline Housing Authority senior housing residents.
7. Julie Levesque spoke about the problems created by the door to the Dunkin Donut shop on Beacon Street in Coolidge Corner. Because of a downward slope in the floor at the door and the absence of an automatic door opener, customers who use walkers have difficulties in opening the door to leave the shop. The challenge is particularly great when they hold a beverage container. Management has not been responsive to Julie’s

complaints. Julie would like Dunkin Donuts to add an automatic door opener. We will ask the Commission on Disability to take on the issue.

8. We did not set a date for the next regular meeting.

Notes by Frank Caro