

BROOKLINE COMMUNITY AGING NETWORK
Livable Community Advocacy Committee (LCAC)
March 8, 2021
Notes

Attending: Susan Granoff (Chair), Matt Weiss (ZOOM host), Carol Caro, Carol Seibert, Diana Spiegel, John Seay, David Trevvett, Linda Olson Pehlke, Paul Saner, Roz Feldberg, Rose Rothstein, John Harris, Susan Cohen, Yolanda Rodriguez, Lydia Kaufman, Barbara Wilhelm, Marion Freedman-Gurspan, Lou Crimmins, Roger Blood, Elaine Bakal, Melissa Trevvett (Notes)

1. Charting the Course for Brookline's Future: The Role of Planning and Zoning. Guest Speaker: Linda Olson Pehlke, urban planner and Town Meeting Member (Precinct 2).

Linda stated that several reasons combine currently to make planning and zoning a critical issue for Brookline now. Examples are: intense development pressure; increased number of demolitions; ease of introducing warrant articles proposing zoning changes at Town Meeting; recent changes in State Law permitting Town Meeting approval of proposed zoning changes by a simple majority instead of a two-thirds vote; and stronger support in Town Meeting for an increase in density.

Linda expressed her concerns that the growing push in Brookline for more affordable housing and greater housing density could push the Town into taking hard-to-reverse actions prematurely, without properly considering the implications of these actions, the appropriate distinction between different neighborhoods in terms of what housing is appropriate where, or the set of expanded services and infrastructure that would need to be put into place to handle the increased population.

As a better route, Linda proposed a Comprehensive Planning process for Brookline, emphasizing the importance of its being comprehensive and community generated. Linda raised Somerville as a model that Brookline could emulate. She reiterated her concern that Town Meeting not make major land use changes without a comprehensive planning process to guide it. She announced an organization being formed, "Brookline By Design" to advocate for a comprehensive planning process. There will soon be a website available.

Linda's slide presentation is attached to the email.

During the question-answer period following the presentation, questions on the following topics were raised:

- How would Brookline go about starting a comprehensive planning process that included neighborhood design?
- Possibility of a partial approach to planning rather than a comprehensive approach in order to reduce the time?
- Does the Baker Housing Choice Bill require that all zoning votes change from 2/3 to 50%+1?
- Is the most recent comprehensive plan for Brookline (Brookline 2005-2015) guiding current planning?
- What are Linda's views on the ZBA approach to its decision-making?
- How many affordable units is the Town away from having 10%?

2. Upcoming Hearings. Susan Granoff called the committee members' attention to the public hearings in March listed below that are of special interest to seniors. She encouraged attendees to support the budget for the Council on Aging by making a public comment at the March 8 public hearing or emailing the subcommittee and calling attention to needs of seniors and the work of the Senior Center. Susan reported that the Task Force to Re-imagine Policing is proposing to eliminate the Council on Aging as an independent Town department and make it a just a small part of a huge new Town department. Susan encouraged individuals to email their opposition to eliminating the COA as an independent Town department to the five Select Board Members and to attend the Select Board public hearing on March 16 at 7 pm and make a brief statement.

- March 8, Advisory Committee Human Services Subcommittee Public Hearing on Council on Aging's FY22 Budget
- Select Board Public Hearing on Final Reports of Two Select Board Committees on Brookline Police Department (including a Proposal to Eliminate the Council on Aging as an Independent Department) on March 16 with Final Vote by Select Board on March 30.

3. Update on Status of Final Report of Select Board Committee on Pedestrian Friendly Lighting. David Trevvett reported on efforts he had recently undertaken in consultation with Select Board Chair Bernard Greene. David had agreed to see what he could do to help complete and submit the draft report developed by the Pedestrian Lighting Committee, which Frank Caro had led. David had managed to contact the two remaining members of that committee, who had agreed to help, though the key technical expert on lighting is currently swamped at work. In the

meantime, David is following up on initial contacts Frank had made to raise awareness of the committee's work with various Town groups. He hopes the technical expert will be able to update the draft report to reflect new guidelines from the Illuminating Engineering Society. The committee's charge was to make a report to Town Meeting, and the aim is to have a presentation for the Fall 2021 Town Meeting.

4. Update on Centre St. Development Project (Project behind the Senior Center) Hebrew Senior Life withdrew the original proposal for both affordable and market rate development projects on Centre St. and is re-focusing only on developing a 40B project at 108 Centre St. Carol Caro, a member of the Centre St Zoning Committee, confirmed that the Committee has disbanded, as it is no longer currently needed, although it may need to be re-constituted when a new plan is available.

5. Brief Discussion of Brookline's Senior Vaccine Rollout

The Town has received some vaccine and is contacting people on its registration list. Members described different experiences they have had. There still seems to be a problem for seniors who do not have access to the Internet.

6. LCAC will meet next on April 5, 2021 at 3 pm. Matt Weiss will set up the Zoom meeting.

Please let me know if you have additions or corrections for these notes.
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