

BROOKLINE COMMUNITY AGING NETWORK
Livable Community Advocacy Committee (LCAC)
May 10, 2021
Notes

Attending: Susan Granoff (Chair), Matt Weiss (ZOOM host), Garrett Anderson, Carol Caro, Carol Seibert, Paula Friedman, Diana Spiegel, John Seay, David Trevvett, Linda Olson Pehlke, Susan Cohen, Yolanda Rodriguez, Marion Freedman-Gurspan, Lou Crimmins, Roger Blood, Henry Winkleman, Ruthann Dobek, John Harris, Estelle Record, Sally Guy, Melissa Trevvett (Note-taker), Betsy Pollock, (Presenter), Michael Allen (Presenter), Kathleen Scanlon (Presenter), Michael Jacobs (Presenter), Michael Alperin (Presenter)

1. Presentation: "Shouting Down Ageism: Finding Your Voice"
Betsy Pollock, President of the Brookline Senior Center Board of Directors and social worker for over 50 years

Pollock focused on three aspects of ageism: Understanding the situation, thinking about solutions, and moving to action. She noted that older adults are living longer and healthier lives; the 85+ demographic is the fastest growing segment of the population. Older adults want both to share their wisdom and to be open and participate in new experiences. She noted that ageism is a form of discrimination woven into our culture; it is expressed by stereotypes of and bias against older people, as well as often outright scorn. She called attention to the fact that this bias comes not only from younger people, but also from within the population of older people.

Solutions are to view aging as healthy and to re-frame it -- moving away from seeing aging in a negative way. Pollock pointed to new nomenclature being adopted, such as, use of the term "older adults" rather than seniors. It is important to educate Brookline residents about the fact that older adults can provide assistance to others in various age groups and with various tasks as well as need and accept help themselves. Inclusivity is frequently mentioned as critical to a healthy society, and it is important to include older adults in this vision of inclusivity and to invest in their future. In Brookline older adults are nearly 20% of the population and may well grow to 25 or 30% of the population by 2030.

Pollock particularly urged attendees to advocate on behalf of themselves and other older adults, and to find out where they are most comfortable advocating--the local, state or federal level. She listed a set of issues that call for advocacy in Brookline, for example: aging-in-place, housing

affordability, mobility, increased Senior Center space and a 20-year strategic plan for senior needs. It is critical for older adults to participate in all Town decisions that affect them. She noted that the Town has responded to seniors by restoring budget cuts to the Council on Aging and adding positions to the Senior Center. She sees increased candidate and Town-government awareness. She emphasized the need for persistence and re-imagining the future for older adults in the Town, and asked each person in the audience to become an advocate on issues affecting older adults. Discussion followed, with audience members reflecting on their own experiences with ageism and expressing their concerns.

2. Presentation: Warrant Article 27 (Relating to Construction of Colonel Floyd Public Housing for Seniors at 32 Marion St.)

Co-petitioners Kathleen Scanlon, TMM Pct. 3, and Michael Jacobs, Chair, Brookline Housing Authority Board of Commissioners; and Michael Alperin, Executive Director, Brookline Housing Authority.

As explained by the petitioners, Kathleen Scanlon and Michael Jacobs, Warrant Article 27 is a home rule petition for a special act exempting the Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) from state bidding requirements in the construction and development of the Colonel Floyd affordable housing project for seniors at 32 Marion St. The exemption would enable the construction of a more energy efficient building that would meet “passive house” standards (which requires greater coordination at all levels and stages of construction than is possible under existing state bidding regulations). In turn, the use of passive house standards would make it easier to get state funding for this construction project sooner. Michael Alperin reviewed the architectural plans for this development, emphasizing the improvements that will benefit residents. Both the Select Board and the Advisory Committee have voted Favorable Action unanimously on Warrant Article 27. After discussion, LCAC attendees also voted unanimously to endorse WA 27.

3. Other Warrant Articles to support at upcoming Town Meeting:

The proposal was made to support Warrant Article 40, which urges the Town to provide stable funding for the Brookline Interactive Group (BIG) so that it is not dependent upon cable fees of Town residents. The vote was unanimous to endorse Warrant Article 40.

4. Michael Allen, Moderator of the BrooklineCAN and Brookline Senior Center Annual Town Election Forum and HELP Counselor, Senior Center, reflected on the Forum. At one point 64 participants attended. He mentioned he had received comments suggesting that if the Forum were

later in the day, more people could attend. Next year's Forum could benefit by being held earlier in the election cycle, not only because it would be helpful to people voting early, but also because it could influence the course and focus of the discussion of election issues.

5. The next Livable Community Advocacy Committee meeting will be June 7, 2021. As a follow-up to Betsy Pollock's talk, Susan mentioned inviting Miriam Aschkenasy, the newly elected member of the Select Board, to speak to the group at one of the next meetings.

Melissa Trevvett
Note-taker