

Brookline Community Aging Network  
Livable Community Advocacy Committee  
November 9, 2020  
Notes

Attending: Matt Weiss (Zoom Host), Susan Granoff, Paula Friedman, Susan Cohen, Marion Freedman-Gurspan, Melissa Trevvett, Yolanda Rodriguez, David Trevvett, Gordon Szerlip, Lydia Kaufman, John Harris, Lou Crimmins, Carol Seibert

1. Paula Friedman volunteered to chair today's meeting. She introduced herself as a member of Brookline Council on Aging, Brookline Senior Center Advisory Committee, and Town Meeting member for 15 years representing Precinct 14.
2. Discussion on honoring Frank Caro, whose recent death we note with sadness. Frank was a founder of Brookline CAN and served as co-chair with Ruthann Dobek. He initiated and ably led the Livable Community Advocacy Committee (LCAC) of Brookline CAN. One of our reasons for meeting today is to determine how best to carry on this committee's important work. A number of proposals to honor Frank are reportedly being discussed in Brookline including at the Pedestrian Advisory Committee and The Friends of Hall's Pond. Other ideas suggested today included benches on Beacon Street or in the pocket park at John and Green Streets, donations to the Brookline Senior Center in Frank's name, and naming a large meeting room in the Senior Center. No definitive action taken at this time.
3. Presentation by Susan Granoff speaking about Town Meeting Warrant Article 13, an act authorizing the town to establish a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption. Susan is Chair of the Moderator's Committee on Elderly Tax Relief. The program is modeled after a Sudbury program which has been operating since 2014, and which has been adopted in a number of other Massachusetts towns. In brief, the act would result in a property tax of not more than 10% of total gross household income, and not less than 50% of the property tax that would have been due without the exemption. To qualify, the homeowner must own and reside in a Brookline property with an assessed value no greater than the prior year's average assessed value of all Brookline single-family homes

and condos plus 10% (which, currently, is \$1.34 million), be at least 65 years of age, have lived ten consecutive years in Brookline, have a gross income in the prior year that was low enough to qualify for the circuit-breaker income tax credit, and must not hold excessive assets. The applicant also must be unable to qualify for the Brookline property tax deferral program, often because of holding a conventional mortgage on the property. There is a five year look-back provision. The program is intended to be budget-neutral, paid for by a 0.25 percent (maximum 1%) property tax surcharge, to be set by the Select Board. Estimates are that the cost for the median condominium owner would be \$11 per year, and for a single family homeowner \$34 per year. Questions and discussion followed. Susan clarified that this is a proposed exemption program, not a tax deferral. After airing varying viewpoints, the LCAC voted with no opposition, and one abstention to endorse Article 13. Susan Granoff will be listing endorsers as she presents at Town Meeting later this month, but she would appreciate any LCAC member speaking for the article at that Zoom meeting. If any member decides to do so, please let Susan know so she can give details of the procedure for speaking.

4. This meeting of the LCAC was being recorded by Matt Weiss for internal reference. He did not feel we were in a position to put the recording up on BIG since participants had not agreed to this beforehand. There was some feeling that later meetings appearing on BIG might encourage new members.
5. We agreed to continue meetings of the LCAC. We will be discussing further how to organize the work. Possibly having dual chairpersons was suggested as a way to divide the workload. Selection of topics and speakers for upcoming meetings will be on the agenda for the next meeting on December 7, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. Matt Weiss has kindly agreed to host that Zoom meeting. If anyone has a request for an agenda item and speaker, please send these out to the mailing list so we can determine what to look at next.

Notes today by Carol Seibert