

BrooklineCAN Steering Committee

Notes

December 20, 2017

Attendance: Kathy Burnes, Frank Caro, Ruthann Dobek, Karen Fischer, Susan Granoff, Susan Krinsky, Elenore Parker, John Seay, Ruth Seidman, David Trevvett

Educational Program in Memory of Helen Kass. Current plans are for a special program in May, with Paula Span, a NY Times columnist on caregiving [<https://www.nytimes.com/by/paula-span>], as the speaker. The Education Committee has alerted Helen's family, and will work together with them and with Communications to prepare a writeup about Helen. Currently there is plenty of lead time to bring this all together.

Proposed Date for 2018 Annual Meeting. The currently planned date is Thursday, September 13, though it will be competing with numerous other local organization events. A key early action is picking the main speaker and the event's theme – the theme usually comes first, then finding a speaker on that theme, with other things generally falling into place after those key decisions. There was discussion on whether it would be too early or too ambitious to focus on business as the theme. The planning schedule calls for appointing a planning committee in February.

Age-Friendly Business Initiative. Kathy Burnes has put together some talking points, e.g, that ¼ of Brookline's population are ages 55+. Kathy has seen somewhere a statement that there are 7,000 businesses in Brookline, but that seems too large – maybe lots of sole proprietors (lawyers, real estate agents, medical practitioners, etc). Frank referenced the Donahue Institute at U Mass Amherst, which projects that Brookline's population of 60 & older will grow 40% by 2030, from 10,000 in 2010 to roughly 14,000. The Age-Friendly business planning group is drawing on age-friendly business characteristics lists from NYC and Washington DC, and will adapt DC's application form. The plan is to invite businesses to join the campaign, which they would do by filling out and submitting the application form, agreeing to abide by some unspecified number of age-friendly features. The form will permit businesses to highlight age-friendly features they are most proud of.

Frank has had a long conversation with Roger Lipsonn, who's encountered a number of former business owners or rotary members who might be helpful; he is recruiting a list of 10 early adopters. We'd like to invite both the Coolidge Corner Association and the Chamber of Commerce to be co-sponsors of the program. BrooklineCAN will need to ensure good processing of the applications, getting the names up on the BrooklineCAN web site promptly. We'd like to bring the campaign to a close with a public event, it would be great if it could be the annual meeting, but we might not be ready by September.

The program should include regular updates for the businesses, highlighting special features. Frank suggested strongly that we NOT attempt at this time to get businesses as members, but rather get them involved through the age-friendly business initiative, then later bring up membership.

There was discussion of potential partnerships with institutions such as Brookline Booksmith and Coolidge Corner Theater, especially when they host events that tie into age-friendly issues.

Treasurer's Report. It's been a positive month, but the revenue picture is still low overall for the fiscal year to date. Membership is down, at 305. The two biggest expense items are the membership assistant and the annual meeting. Regarding the former, John wondered whether 4 hours a week is really enough, since she's falling behind. A complication is that she does her work in the basement, but the printer she needs to use is on the 2nd floor, so there's a lot of going up and down stairs. Maybe purchasing a B&W laser printer for the basement for reminder letters, etc. would enable her to be more efficient. Frank asked John to pull together information about the cost of a printer for us to consider at the next meeting.

We spent less on the annual meeting this year compared to last. Henry W donated the bookmarks, we did less large-scale printing.

Committee reports:

Education. The next BCAN event is March 8 in Hunneman Hall, with Margaret Morganroth Gullette speaking on "Ending Ageism". Her book on this topic was recommended for a Pulitzer. Elenore suggested we consider an associated campaign to identify examples of ageism that we have encountered.

Communications. We are continuing the "Power of Engagement" theme with articles in the newsletter. The next issue will feature TRIPPS. Frank suggested we all check out Chobee Hoy's ad in tomorrow's Tab – she offered one of the circles in her ad to BrooklineCAN, so Frank and Carol provided her with logo and text.

Membership. David reported that, in Molly's view, the current low membership levels are not an issue, since we're into a period with many renewals, so should see the number rebound. Planning for the 2nd annual membership drive is moving forward, with the goal of sending out the mailer in late January to former members and prospective members. The mailer would be preceded by an e-mail alert. Planning is also proceeding for the May 10 membership event, with current discussions focusing on a "Trivia" night, bringing in an outside provider who is experienced running such evenings. The cost of an outside provider will mean that we'll offer less in the way of food and drink than in the past, in particular not serving wine so avoiding a bartender cost.

Livable Community Advocacy. Jay Woodward, who has been Brookline's planning director for 30 years, spoke at the last LCA meeting. All who had attended agreed that it was a very informative and useful session. One example: the tall buildings along Beacon Street caused a community backlash that led to new Town zoning restrictions on such buildings, and it's very difficult to have such restrictions lifted – zoning changes require a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting Members. Would zoning changes be beneficial to seniors? The main topic for the January meeting will be a continuing discussion of zoning issues affecting multifamily residential buildings in North Brookline,

Frank reported that there will be action to improve lighting along Winchester, though it took a year after the need was reported to the Town. The Town has decided to use increased pruning as

their immediate response to the need, we'll have to monitor the situation to see how much that helps. LCAC has been advocating for some additional lighting directed to sidewalks.

The Bicycle-Pedestrian subcommittee will have its next meeting in January.

It was suggested that the Livable Community Advocacy committee is a good vehicle for bringing people into BrooklineCAN activities and issues. Topics cover a wide variety of issues and themes, so participation varies from meeting to meeting. There was discussion of how to get the word out about LCA meetings to more people who might be interested, e.g., sending out an agenda or main topic by email. Frank indicated he would look into this.

Member volunteering. (no report today)

Next meeting. Wednesday, January 17, 2018, 3pm at the Senior Center

Notes prepared by David Trevett