

The Brookline Community Aging Network (BCAN) and the Parks and Open Space Division are joining together to celebrate a newly renovated pocket park at John and Green Street. A short program will be held on Thursday, September 29th at 1:00 pm to recognize the efforts of both organizations in turning an open space adjacent to a public parking lot into a welcoming seating area that serves the neighborhood and the Coolidge Corner commercial district.

Several years ago, BCAN reached out to the Director of Brookline's Parks and Open Space Division, Erin Gallentine, to discuss the pocket park at the intersection of Green and John Street. Since its creation many years ago in conjunction with a Town parking lot, the space had been largely overlooked. It was not even on the Town's open space inventory. Ms. Gallentine stated that it was not on the Park Division's list of areas to maintain and was likely on the list of parking lots/public ways that receives seasonal attention as needed.

Ms. Gallentine listened to BCAN's proposal that this could be a meaningful community gathering space and a welcome spot for seniors to rest when walking to and from Coolidge Corner. She committed to refurbishing the lot and converting it into a small pocket park. She wanted to make it particularly attractive to seniors, many of whom live close by. It is a well-placed resting stop for those who live north of Coolidge Corner and are able to walk to and from the commercial area. As there was no separate budget for the work that needed to be done, she said that it would take a little more time and in-house resources to complete the work.

Ms. Gallentine consulted with a group of Town Meeting Members, neighbors and BCAN representative Frank Caro. She engaged Landscape Architect, Ray Dunetz, for a few hours to work with the committee and develop concepts that would be welcoming, meet the needs of the neighborhood and be relatively easy and reasonable to implement.

Following the selection of a concept by the committee, Ms. Gallentine brought the work to her talented staff and got input from the various required disciplines. Jim Casselman, Town of Brookline Landscape Architect, took the concept plan and developed a grading plan that met the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), designed a new plaza, and created the seating and planting plan. Tom Brady, Town Arborist, evaluated the existing trees on site and sourced new trees per Mr. Casselman's plan. The Town's horticulture crew led by Jackie Johnson, removed all of the existing shrubs, installed a new seating plaza and planted the area. The trees were planted by the forestry crew led by Peter Jutras, Forestry Supervisor. All that was missing were benches.

Seeing the project in progress, the children of Richard and Chou Lee approached the Town with a generous offer to pay for the benches. The benches have now been installed and neighborhood residents are delighted! They are looking forward to watching the trees grow and become covered with flowers.

Ms. Gallentine stated that the Town of Brookline is fortunate to have incredibly talented and professional staff at the Park and Open Space Division. Each year she tries to choose one small park that the Division can take a closer look at and try to improve using Town's staff. Other areas that have been improved over the years include Linden Park, Linden Square, Pender Rotary, and the Veterans Memorial at Town Hall. Ms. Gallentine stated that, "Not only does my

staff take a great amount of pride in their work, but it is a terrific opportunity for them to showcase their talent, add incredible value to the community, and improve these spaces efficiently and effectively.”

BCAN and the Parks and Open Space Division welcome the public to attend the opening celebration for this wonderful refurbished greenspace on Thursday, September 29th at 1:00 pm in the park. BCAN is pleased with the results of its advocacy. For the Parks and Open Space Division, the celebration is an opportunity to recognize its staff members who worked on the project. Both BCAN and the Parks and Open Space Division want to thank the Lee family for their kind contribution to the neighborhood.