

Brookline Community Aging Network

Livable Community Advocacy Committee

Notes

September 26, 2016

Attendance: Members: Peter Ames, Joan McCabe, Carol Seibert, Ann Stitt, Susan Granoff, Asaya Zimbov, Matt Weiss, Jackie Wright, Stan Klein, and Frank Caro. Guests from Mass Senior Action: Jan Canavan, Bob Feldman, and Lily Luo

Mass Senior Action. We began with a presentation about Mass Senior Action, a statewide senior advocacy organization. Lily Luo is an intern who works in Mass Senior Action's main office. Lily provided an overview. Mass Senior Action has over 1,000 members who are organized by chapters. The closest chapter to Brookline is in Cambridge. Issues of concern to Mass Senior Action include access to health care, compensation for providers of personal assistance, affordable housing, subsidized transportation (The Ride), and dental insurance for seniors. Jan spoke generally about possibilities for collaboration on transportation and housing issues.

Frank encouraged collaboration on subsidized transportation issues through TRIPPS. He encouraged Lily to communicate with Kerry Ann Tester, director of the TRIPPS program. Susan encouraged Mass Senior Action support for improved access to the Circuit Breaker for property owners with modest incomes and modest assessed values.

Warrant Article 33. Study committee on property-tax relief for low-income senior homeowners. Susan Granoff made a presentation on her warrant article calling for a study committee to develop a proposal for Town Meeting to provide improved options for senior homeowners with modest incomes. Susan wants the committee to give particular consideration to a local circuit program that has been developed in Sudbury Massachusetts. The committee voted unanimously to support the warrant article.

Warrant Article 34. Station Street affordable senior housing. In Henry Winkelman's absence, Frank described the warrant article. Matt Weiss provided additional information about the proposal. The committee voted unanimously to support the warrant article.

Celebration of refurbished pocket park at Green Street and John Street. Frank explained the role of the committee in advocating for upgrading of the pocket park. He explained the effective leadership of Parks director Erin Gallentine. He also explained how the benches were contributed by Elizabeth Leung, Paul Lee, and Tom Lee in honor of their parents Richard and Chou Lee. The celebration is scheduled for September 29 at 1 PM at the park. BrooklineCAN will be sponsoring the refreshments.

Street lighting for pedestrians. Susan and Frank led a discussion of the sidewalk lighting project that was launched by the committee last year. The concern is with adequacy of street lighting from a pedestrian perspective. Last year our volunteers observed sidewalks in the early fall after dark. The intent was to observe conditions while leaves were still on trees. The early fall is a good time of year for attention to sidewalk conditions in darkness because days are short, leaves are on the trees, and temperatures are mild. Last year Frank and Susan did all of the field work. They covered much of the flat areas near Coolidge Corner and Brookline Village. They reported 50 problems. We will send observers out again this year. We want to know the extent to which problems reported last year have been corrected. We also want to know about problems that were not identified last year. The observers will use forms developed last year. They will also be equipped with maps showing the locations of all utility poles. Susan has names of people who signed up at both our annual meeting and the membership committee. Three committee members have agreed to help: Carol Seibert, Matt Weiss, and Asaya Zimbov. Volunteers will hear from Frank. He wants volunteers to go out in groups of two or three.

Other business. Susan Granoff provided an update on her advocacy in opposition to the placement of an elementary school on a site near the Stop and Shop supermarket on Harvard Street. Susan is concerned that at a minimum, operation of the supermarket would be disrupted during construction of the school. Many seniors who live near the site depend on the Stop and Shop. Susan urged members to contact selectmen and school committee members to register their opposition to the Stop and Shop site.

Next meeting: Monday, October 24 at 3 PM.