

BrooklineCAN Membership Committee

December 9, 2015

Notes

Attending: Peter Ames, Ellen Bick, Karen Fischer, Judith Kidd, Virginia LaPlante, Andrea Meyers, David Trevvett, Melissa Trevvett, Molly Turlish, and Ellen Young. Guest: Susan Granoff.

Membership numbers: BrooklineCAN has 388 active members, compared with 392 November 2nd. On December 1st, 2014, there were 311 members, making the 77 increase year-to-year nearly 25 percent. The major changes in the past year include emails to members whose renewal date falls in the following month and mailings to members whose renewal date is four months in the past or earlier. The next mailing is planned for January 2016, to be sent to members whose renewal dates fall in October 2015 and earlier. A copy of the July 2015 letter was distributed at the meeting, and Molly requested edits, comments, and suggestions by the end of December for the January letter.

BrooklineCAN initiatives – Safer Sidewalks Project: Joan McCabe had planned to join us, but she has laryngitis, and Susan Granoff reported for both of them. They became involved in the project as part of the Livable Communities Advocacy Committee (LCAC) of BrooklineCAN. The project began in early 2014 with a grant from Jewish Family & Children's Services, which financed the hiring of Reservist Janet Selcer, who completed the initial phases of the project. She organized residents of all five senior public housing developments to conduct walks to assess sidewalk safety for pedestrians in general and for people with disabilities. They took systematic notes about trouble spots using safety checklists. Their findings were organized into a report presented at a meeting June 30 with officials from the Town Department of Public Works (DPW), and more than 20 people attended the meeting. In July, as Janet's role was ending, she turned over the project leadership to Joan and Susan, who have continued her organizing work with public housing residents. They led follow-up walks in the fall and found that a number of improvements had been made and that some challenges remained. These findings were shared with DPW November 2nd. Again, at least 20 residents of the five buildings participated. Each building reported, and DPW reporting progress toward pedestrian safety goals. A second follow-up meeting is planned for May 2016.

The project has multiple goals, including improving pedestrian safety, especially near public housing residences for seniors, encouraging residents to work together on issues important to them, and introducing BrooklineCAN to them. About 20 residents of senior public housing were offered a year's complementary membership in BrooklineCAN in recognition of their participation in the project, and about a dozen of them completed the membership form and are now members. Susan mentioned offering a free or reduced price renewal, and Molly told her that the Membership Committee would gladly entertain a recommendation from LCAC about what would be appropriate.

Better Lighting Project: as an outgrowth of the work on pedestrian safety, Susan worked with Frank Caro on identifying areas where lighting for pedestrians is not adequate. They focused on areas where senior pedestrians frequently walk after dark, such as near the Senior Center, near the Stop and Stop, and other foot-traffic areas. They walked in October, when most trees still had full foliage and identified 50 addresses where lighting was not adequate (Note: In October, leaves are still on trees, but the time has not yet changed back to Standard time, making it relatively light later than in November-March). DPW reported that most of the complaints they receive related to street lighting are that lights are too bright and disturb residents. LCAC plans follow-up walks in the spring after the leaves return. A number of members of the Membership Committee volunteered to join them.

Hiring a Membership Assistant: Ruthann was unable to attend the meeting, so we will learn later the status of the search.

Welcome calls to new and newly renewed members: Karen Fischer presented the first draft of a phone script for new and newly renewed members. The Committee agreed that calls to new members (especially) and newly renewed members are a good way to include them in the organization and have them feel valued. Since reaching people by telephone is not easy, Karen will also develop a Voice Mail message. Slightly different scripts and messages will be developed for new members as distinct from newly renewed members. Since people may be interested in volunteering, the script should include how to reach Deirdre Waxman at the Senior Center. Molly will check to make sure that a current committee list still goes out with the thank you letters to new members and will research the logistics of identifying new members and newly renewed members.

Topics held for future meetings: because of our commitment to ending every meeting by 4:30, several topics were held for the January 13 meeting, including

- What is membership for and who do we count?
- Discount memberships: for whom? how to make them work?
- Elevator speech(es)
- Demographics: Judith Kidd will invite Linda Pelke to meet with the committee February 10

Next meeting: the second Wednesday of January (1/13/2016), 3-4:30 at the Senior Center, we will review the redrafted welcome calls and discuss the topics held over from this meeting.

Submitted by Molly Turlish
12/12/15