

BrooklineCAN Membership Committee

January 13, 2016

Notes

Attending: Peter Ames, Ellen Bick, Ruthann Dobek, Andrea Meyers, Shirley Partoll, Gayle Rich, Molly Turlish, and Ellen Young. Guest: Lance Chapman

Introductions: Lance was attending the meeting as a potential member of the Committee, so each person attending introduced themselves. He will join the committee.

Membership numbers: Today, we have 380 active members, down slightly from 388 in December and still substantially ahead of January 2015. The highest number of members at any one time is 412. Currently, in addition to the 380 active members, there are 228 former members, 45 inactive members (people who have told us they are no longer interested in membership, many of whom have moved out of Brookline), 21 deceased, and five donors who have never been members). These numbers may be useful as we continue to consider who to count as members.

What is membership for and who do we count (brainstorming): Continuing a discussion begun at our November meeting, we reviewed some of the reasons we need members: financing the work of BrooklineCAN (currently funded adequately), lending substance to advocacy efforts (higher numbers lead to increased clout), and promoting a feeling of ownership on the part of members (so that members feel that they are part of a good organization that does good work). The most consistent request we hear is for increased social opportunities. The Senior Center sponsors many social opportunities, and the BrooklineCAN annual meeting in September and educational programs throughout the year include social time. Increasing opportunities for members to socialize as members is worthy of further consideration. By polling those in attendance, we learned that we joined because friends or neighbors invited us, because we learned about BrooklineCAN by reading the Tab or the Senior Center news and events, and through work connections. At our March meeting, we will brainstorm further and look at the number of former members as part of considering who to count. Future discussions will focus on increasing the number of people who know about BrooklineCAN and who consider joining. House parties and an event at Goddard House (possibly brunch) were suggested.

Discounted memberships: Since all memberships are by donation, there is no requirement that members contribute a minimum of \$25 (the number listed for a one-year, individual membership), but the implication is strong. The Livable Communities Advocacy Committee asked our committee to consider proposing to the Steering Committee that a discounted membership category be created that would help encourage lower-income residents to join and renew. A suggested donation of either \$5 or \$10 was mentioned by LCAC representatives. After discussion, the committee agreed to offer discounted membership for \$10 for individuals and

couples with household income under \$35,000, regardless of residence. The proposal will go to the Steering Committee at their January 20 meeting.

Sponsoring a shredding day: The Steering Committee has expressed interest in sponsoring a shredding day in the spring and asked the Membership Committee whether we might host it. Carol Caro is asking Eastern Bank to sponsor the shredding. Ruthann will let us know the date of the first shredding day so we can check for impact on membership before committing to organizing and hosting the event.

Welcome calls to new and newly renewed members: Karen Fischer was unable to attend, and discussion of phone scripts for such calls was postponed.

Membership Assistant: Anna Bodo has begun work as the BrooklineCAN Membership Assistant. She works on Fridays, when space is available at the Senior Center. We hope she will be able to attend a committee meeting before long.

Next meeting: the second Wednesday of February (2/10/2016), 3-4:30 at the Senior Center. Linda Pelke will present demographic data, and we will review various “elevator speeches.”

Submitted by Molly Turlish
1/18/16