

Notes of July 6, 2021 Brookline Community Aging Network (BrooklineCAN) Membership Committee Meeting via Zoom

Members: Ellen Bick, Carol Caro, Susan Cohen, Ruthann Dobek (ex officio), Marsha Frankel, Janet Gelbart, Judith Kidd (co-chair), Melissa Trevvett (co-chair)

Visit to Brown House

Ellen and Marsha reported on their visit to the Brown House (2Life) on Harvard St. The audience of 13 was receptive and welcoming and was most engaged by and positive about BrooklineCAN's advocacy, for example, the benches along Beacon Street, and the educational programs, which are held at the Senior Center or Goddard. Several attendees mentioned helping out on projects like pedestrian lighting or broken sidewalks and their appreciation of speakers, like the person representing TRIPPS. Both Ellen and Marsha thought that the group they spoke with and others they observed at Brown House are mobile and active, and they would be able to enjoy and contribute to BrooklineCAN activities.

These additional points came up:

- The question of whether there are enough English language speakers at 112 Center St that a meeting with residents there could be useful. The suggestion was made that BrooklineCAN provide cards to International Bazaar on Beacon St because of the Russian customers that shop there.
- Details on the free memberships: People renewing also are eligible for the free one-year membership. How to respond to people who asked about the cost of the next years' membership—WBUR is a good model for us to keep in mind in the sense that only some members provide financial support and many who do not also enjoy it. Support for BrooklineCAN is a donation, and we suggest a standard donation, but no one is turned away. There are no membership cards; new members receive a letter.
- Ellen and Marsha suggested that when we engage with new members or potential members, we need concrete opportunities for them to become involved. A list of committees doesn't elicit a response to their questions about what they can do. Those of us involved in membership need to know what is going on in other committees and how members can contribute. For example, right now the LCAC is doing X and would welcome your help.
- Ruthann indicated that the Senior Center could make special transportation arrangements for a program at Goddard House if it is of great interest.
- Ellen's cookies were a big hit! And this led to the topic of a rugelach bake-off. (Ellen's rugelach are even better than the BrooklineCAN cookies – Marsha)
- Marsha encouraged our visiting Brown House.

- Could this sort of program be effective in other apartment buildings—apartment buildings in which a number of older people reside, but in which there is not on-site manager, concierge or social director, for example, 1501 Beacon St or 1443 Beacon St. We might be able to organize something similar to the talk at Brown House, but it would take more work. One approach would be to identify any BrooklineCAN members living there and work with them.

Contacting Former Members about Rejoining

Although the committee planned to contact former members to ask them to renew their memberships, we decided not to continue this effort. A couple of issues emerged: we did not know first-hand many of the former members and based on earlier experiences committee members felt the results of this sort of effort is not productive.

Role of BrooklineCAN Membership Committee in contacting donors or business members

Ruthann emphasized the important of acknowledging donor gifts and connecting with donors to try to involve them more. We decided that members of the Committee can play a role in acknowledging and thanking Business members as well as other member-donors. Some of these follow-ups should be contacted by Ruthann; the situation will vary. Three donors came up for specific attention. Welltower, Providence House, and B'nai B'rith had not renewed. Ruthann will contact Welltower; Susan will contact the other two. Melissa will contact Marjorie Kornhauser, who has been a regular BrooklineCAN donor over a period of years.

Our discussion about involving donors highlighted the need to have at ready a set of concrete actions or upcoming programs or events that we can offer when we ask donors, new members or current members to increase their involvement. It was pointed out that BrooklineCAN has always had too few ways to involve lots of people. Some examples of how to involve people were mentioned: If LCAC is having a discussion of an issue, tie this to actions, like signing a petition or contacting a Town Meeting member. Much of this activity hinges on being able to resume in-person activities, like the educational programs.

- Jude and Melissa will touch base with Steering Committee (meeting on 7/21) about
 - Asking committee chairs for concrete activities that we can talk about with new members or prospective members
 - Budget for the October program

Data on membership comments: The age breakdown indicated that we have a slightly older membership than we initially thought. The count of the last three fiscal years of membership showed that we lost 100 members between March 2020 and June 2021, so directly linked to the pandemic, which was not surprising. We appreciated the assistance from John Seay and Sandy Spector in sending us data. We decided we did

not need additional information and should move on to focusing on bringing in new members.

October 4 Program

Joseph Coughlin has not replied to a follow-up that Marsha sent, so we will move on to other options. We brainstormed about other options and made some assignments for members.

We decided to go forward with planning for the event on the 4th. realizing that not all members would be comfortable attending, and that if the COVID situation worsens, we may need to cancel.

Laundry list of possible programs

- Boston Encore Network

- Town recreational opportunities for older adults

- Joseph Coughlin –speaking on stages of retirement and/or his book

- Intergenerational Storytelling

- Robert Weiss – retirement

Need New Chair or Co-Chairs

Jude and Melissa discussed the need for a new chair or co-chairs by fall and asked committee members to be thinking about this.

Next Meeting

August 3, 3 – 4:30 pm, via Zoom