

Hello Livable Community Advocacy Committee (LCAC),

Thank you for reaching out with this opportunity to connect and discuss our mutual goals. Since the advent of Ramadan and officially turning in my nomination papers to run for office,, I have been contemplating the values that ground me. As I spend this time with my family, I can't help but think about my Brookline family and how both have shaped me into who I am today. I grew up in a multigenerational home with my grandparents and will be forever thankful. In my culture, elders are respected and honored for their wisdom and experience. Elders often play a large role in child rearing and the passing down of cultural values. I believe that some in Brookline have forgotten the blessing and luxury it is to live and grow in a multigenerational community.

When I moved to precinct 4 and began organizing in Brookline, I couldn't imagine how much I would learn from this community. The resilience and persistence of our community, from the youth to our elders, to proactively work to better our condition despite both historic and new barriers was inspiring. Living in and **being** a part of this community is a privilege that has given me perspective on the barriers to change here.

Many marginalized communities in Brookline are seen as an afterthought, not a priority. I've seen firsthand how many elderly and disabled residents become trapped in their homes and suffer from isolation because of inefficient management of snow on sidewalks in the winter. I've seen the way folks in Kent Street and the Village have a hard time getting access to programs like the Brookline Food Pantry despite voicing these concerns at various meetings. I've seen the way Brookline's elders are overrepresented in at-risk populations for poverty and housing insecurity, especially those that are low income and from the black or brown community. While all issues of inequity are linked, many of the solutions are as well.

Brookline has no shortage of resources, folks willing to do the work, or qualified professionals that can make lasting change. What much of Brookline's governance does lack is perspective and a vested interest in making change happen sooner rather than later. Some have said that I may be intense in my approach to addressing these barriers. But, you simply cannot move at a snail's pace when the elders that guide you discuss their fears that after renting for decades, they will die in housing.

Working as a community organizer to promote equity for Brookline's marginalized communities, it was never lost on me that we all have at least one thing in common. God willing, we all grow old one day. And when that day comes, our community will largely determine our quality of life.

So when myself and others began working on an affordable housing proposal, we sought advice from our elders that have lived in Brookline for decades. In creating the Housing Economic Equity Plan submitted to the CPA, we ensured that the properties we searched for were accessible and compatible with multigenerational housing. Low-income families with children and elders were two populations of interest when designing the proposal. Similarly, one facet of my role in creating a workforce development program that successfully trained residents to earn their federal licenses, is outreach to and retaining a diverse student base including teenagers to those 50+, with all ranges of academic backgrounds, and all levels of technology/computer proficiency. Increasing equity, accessibly, has always been the goal.

If I am elected to the office of Select Board, I will work to promptly address issues of equity like affordable childcare, affordable housing, workforce development & economic opportunities, environmentally sustainable practices, and meaningful inclusion, as well as transparency & accountability in governance. I hope I can look to LCAC, Brookline CAN, and other groups for wisdom on how to ensure that Brookline's elders are not an afterthought, but a part of the discussion and solution.

Should Brookline choose differently, I will still work with so many others doing amazing work in the community to address these issues as a community organizer. I hope I can still look to LCAC, Brookline CAN, and other groups for wisdom on how to ensure that Brookline's elders are an active part of the discussion on how to make effective community-based solutions.

I look forward to our conversation on Monday.

Best,
Sana Hafeez