

Brookline Together Board Meeting Minutes June 8, 2020

Board Officers:

President: Caitlin McNulty
Vice-President: Blake Plavchak
Secretary: Ally Bove
Treasurer: Bill Kim

Membership: Lois McCafferty
Business Development: Jason Tigano
Community Events: Melissa Kilmer
Beautification: Tony Griffith; co-chair Lisa Wilson
Newsletter: Brock Boutwell

Attendance:

Board members/co-chairs present: Ally Bove, Tony Griffith, Melissa Kilmer, Bill Kim, Lois McCafferty, Caitlin McNulty, Samantha Melhorn, Blake Plavchak, Jason Tigano, Lisa Wilson

Regrets: Brock Boutwell, Pam Grabowski

Caitlin McNulty called the board meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Congratulations to our Treasurer, Bill Kim, and his wife Gina on the recent birth of a new child!

Correspondence:

- The Urban Redevelopment Authority contacted us regarding a residential building façade improvement project. We do not yet know if Brookline will qualify. We will keep an eye on this and provide updates when available.

Treasurer Report (Bill Kim):

- Main account balance \$31,797, which includes \$2,500 Census Mini-Grant and \$5,000 earmarked for the COVID-19 business relief fund. Available funds are \$24,297.
- The only incoming money right now is for Breezefest
- Newsletter account: \$1,903, is stable at the moment.

Committee Submissions:

- Finance – see above Treasurer’s report
- Newsletter
 - New Committee Chair? (Brock Boutwell stepping down)
 - Blake has a suggestion; he’ll follow up on it.
- Membership & Business Development (Lois McCafferty and Jason Tigano)
 - Membership report:
 - Business directory proofs are coming in late June
 - Will have a membership table @ Breezefest if Breezefest occurs
 - Business Development report:

- Healthy Streets
 - Being sponsored by the City of Pittsburgh, DOMI, a local cycling group
 - Aims to temporarily reconfigure business districts to make them more COVID-friendly
 - Brookline Blvd is the widest “Main Street” in the City of Pittsburgh – we may be able to accomplish interesting things re: outdoor dining, outdoor retail, etc. that would allow businesses to function at a larger capacity than the current occupancy limits in the “green” phase allow
 - This will be a temporary program due to the pandemic
 - Unsure when it’d be implemented – Blake will follow up with DOMI for an update
 - There’s a meeting about it occurring this evening; we’ll follow up and get more information.
 - If it occurs, Brookline Together will help manage communication for business owners and residents.
 - Cash Mob – No update
 - Loyalty Bond – Looking For Group’s loyalty bond is live on the Honeycomb website
- Welcome Wagon
 - Sent out 33 new resident packets on June 1 for those who moved into Brookline in May
 - Notable transfer: 1139 Clippert, purchased 10/2018 for \$29,000 and sold 3/2020 for \$121,000
 - Please contact Pam Grabowski with any special events that can be advertised in the two blank ad spaces in the Welcome Wagon packet
- Community Events
 - Breezefest – August 8 – updated plan and scope
 - Currently have 36 vendors and 3 food trucks
 - Will proceed with placing vendors on sidewalk space only, with vendors spaced out more broadly than in the past
 - Unclear whether we can still get Brookline Blvd closed
 - Tree of Life still wants to provide some children’s programming but would have to scale back to avoid close physical contact (e.g. no bouncy castle)
 - Food trucks and music are planned
 - In green phase, can have events with up to 250 people
 - How do we ensure it doesn’t get larger?
 - We may have to hire security to assist with entry
 - Perhaps free ticketing for specific time slots
 - Perhaps putting vendors in the Mazza garage and counting entries and exits
 - Blake will reach out to city’s Permits, Licenses, Inspection dept and try to obtain more guidance regarding what we can do to ensure we follow PA “green phase” guidelines
 - Banners will be hung ASAP
- Beautification
 - 2020 Cleanups
 - Will plan for a pre-Breezefest cleanup, a minor post-Breezefest cleanup, and the typical fall cleanup in October
 - Shed
 - Lowes said to reach out after Labor Day re: getting a shed donated for our Beautification supplies
 - Jacob/Whited Update
 - Dan McKeever has been mowing the grass, but the front bank needs some weed-whacking – committee will work on scheduling a half-day or day for this with some volunteers ASAP

- Due to a number of issues, we have terminated our Memorandum of Understanding with Burgh Bees and will no longer be working with them to create an apiary on the site
 - We still plan to create an apiary on the site – we have board members and community members of Brookline Together who are skilled in beekeeping, and we will also pursue potentially allowing Brookliners to keep their own hives on the property
 - We have applied for a grant from PA American Water for work at the site
 - We are awaiting follow-up communication from the URA re: altering the planned use of funds from our existing NIF grant. Jason Tigano will follow up on this.
- Pitt Moss
 - Caitlin met with a Brookline resident who works with Pitt Moss. They have a water-retaining garden soil product, and good pricing for community development projects. We may be able to explore bulk pricing with them for soil when the community garden is closer to completion.
- Love Your Block Grant – for Jacob/Whited welcome sign
 - Has been postponed for 1 year due to COVID
 - Will get the grant for spring 2021 and can apply for additional funds at that time too
- Wreath Lighting
 - Ordering a variety of light bulbs from the original wreath company to test on some of the wreaths that have burned-out bulbs; cost will be around \$200
 - Going to do a public fundraiser for this year’s wreath hanging/removal costs instead of asking business community for donations
- Cannon Park
 - There have been some complaints on local social media about the foliage at Cannon Park. We’re communicating with the city about this. Some people don’t like the current landscape design, but others do.
- Cigarette Receptacles
 - Working on a schedule for emptying them
 - Discussion re: installing reflectors on them is tabled for now; will revisit when time allows

Old Business

- Census Grant
 - Ally Bove is working with Kayla Donohue to find a new date(s) for these events; update will be forthcoming
- Flag Receptacle
 - It’s at Brookline Teen Outreach; no update on when it’s being installed

New Business

- City Council could potentially be able to provide some funding for the Jacob/Whited project, but it would require a lot of regulatory steps.
 - Neighborhood Needs money: meant to be used for projects that have a public benefit. The educational component of the community garden/apiary would fit this requirement.
 - Unfortunately, there is a clause in our lease on the Jacob/Whited site that says that any projects on the site will not be funded by the City.
 - We could potentially try to amend this lease; the Councilman would have to introduce a motion to amend the lease and get a majority of Council members to vote in favor
 - The Neighborhood Needs money takes approximately 3-6 months to get under contract; we would front the money and the program would reimburse us
 - The total amount available would be fairly small; likely a few thousand dollars

- This process would take a while, so this money wouldn't be available until at least 2021
 - The board will continue to consider this and revisit later.
- Next community meeting: July 2020. At 50% capacity, 60 people could be in Brookline Teen Outreach. We can have a Zoom option.
 - The board agreed to continue with the July meeting in-person with social distancing.

Announcements

- None

Motion to adjourn: Caitlin McNulty; second: Bill Kim; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.