

Brookline Together

Community Meeting Minutes: January 13, 2020

7:00 pm Brookline Teen Outreach

Board Officers Present:

President:	Caitlin McNulty	Membership:	Lois McCafferty
Vice-President:	(Bill Kim)	Business Development:	Jason Tigano
Secretary:	Ally Bove	Beautification:	Lisa Wilson (interim)
Treasurer:	Bill Kim	Community Events:	Melissa Kilmer (interim)
		Newsletter:	Brock Boutwell

Board Officers Not Present: n/a; all present

Attendance:

31 attendees

Proceedings:

Meeting called to order at 7:09 pm by Board President Caitlin McNulty.

Approval of prior minutes:

November community meeting minutes were approved by the board. (Motion: B. Kim, Second: L. Wilson, vote to approve unanimous.)

Correspondence:

- Received a thank-you from the Brookline Food Pantry for a \$101 donation made following the Brookline Together holiday party
- Received communications from 7-8 individuals who want to volunteer to assist with the Jacob/Whited site development into the apiary and community garden

Treasurer Report

- In 2019, Brookline Together spent approximately \$500 more than was brought in (which was not problematic because the accounts were in good shape at the beginning of the year)
- \$32,287 = current balance
- Bill Kim asked for a motion to approve Membership, Community Events, and Beautification budgets (specific budgets were printed and provided to all attendees). Motion: Brock Boutwell; Second: Jason Tigano; all in favor.

Committee Reports:

- Finance (Bill Kim)
 - See above under Treasurer Report
- Newsletter (Brock Boutwell)
 - Thank you for submissions to the January 2020 newsletter – this was the most number of submissions of any issue so far. Support has been growing, and the Newsletter committee appreciates that.
 - January 2020 issue is out digitally, and paper copies will be coming out this week.
 - Deadline for March issue submissions = February 14
 - Deadline for advertising in March issue = February 7
 - Always open to new advertisers!
- Membership (Lois McCafferty)
 - Membership forms to businesses have been sent out
 - Working on 2020-2021 business directory.
 - If you would like to update your business' information, there are forms available on the back table
 - Planning a membership mixer to get to know each other and invite prospective members who would like to learn more about Brookline Together
 - Membership Committee meetings in 2020 will be the 1st Monday of each month at 6:45pm at Melissa Distel Photography, 800 Brookline Blvd
- Business Development (Jason Tigano)
 - Met jointly with Membership committee in January, and the Membership and Business Development committees will continue meeting jointly throughout 2020
 - Meetings will be the 1st Monday of each month at 6:45pm at Melissa Distel Photography, 800 Brookline Blvd
- Community Events (Melissa Kilmer)
 - Committee is meeting immediately after tonight's meeting at Moonlite Café
 - Meetings will be the 3rd Monday of each month, exact time TBD
 - When the 3rd Monday of the month is a holiday, committee will meet the 4th Monday of the month
- Beautification (Lisa Wilson)
 - Next meeting is Monday January 20th, 7pm at Moonlite Café
 - Lisa showed the 26 cigarette receptacles that will be hung along Brookline Blvd. The committee is looking for volunteers to empty them once per week; a schedule must be finalized before we can hang them.
 - Discussed whether we can ask the business owners to empty them – unfortunately we cannot do this because (1) there are only so many keys, and

- (2) our contract with the city makes it clear that Brookline Together has to be responsible for it, so we would prefer our own volunteers
- Working on obtaining a community shed to store beautification materials (currently everything is spread out amongst several people's garages)
- Will discuss the holiday wreaths and any improvements that can be made
- Will be coordinating with City of Pittsburgh regarding street lights on Brookline Blvd that are out, to have those lights replaced as soon as possible
- All problematic lighting at the Recreation Center (discussed at the November 2019 community meeting) has been fixed except for 1 that needs to be replaced. Thank you to Brookline Together members who brought this up at the last meeting!
- Welcome Wagon (Pam Grabowski)
 - Sent out 28 new resident packets for December 2019
 - Several notable transfers (from October 2019) were listed; many houses were flipped and sold within a year for more than double what they were purchased for. Several of them were flipped by entities that were first-time purchasers of real estate in Brookline.

Old Business

- Jacob/Whited
 - Brookline Together has received an NIF grant from the Urban Redevelopment Authority to develop this land into an apiary and community garden
 - The amount of the grant is \$19,995
 - At the next meeting (March 2020), we'll be presenting some plans for the space
 - Will be gathering volunteers for this project
 - Brookline Together is also applying for a Love Your Block grant to renovate the neighborhood welcome sign at Jacob/Whited to spruce that area up as well

New Business

- Organization Goals for 2020
 - Create a calendar with all major community events, committee meetings, etc. and distribute to all Brookline Together members and prospective members/volunteers
 - Let us know how you would prefer to receive information from Brookline Together! If there's a form of communication you would prefer that we aren't doing, let us know and we'll try.
 - Offer more opportunities that reflect community needs – in 2019, we conducted the resident and business owner community survey. In fact, the community garden at the Jacob/Whited site is a direct response to hearing from many residents that they would like a community garden!
 - Other ideas/concerns from meeting attendees:
 - Lisa Peach: Any updated on the tarped building at Merrick and Brookline Blvd? It's unsightly.

- Jason Tigano: There was some work happening at the building a few weeks ago, but unsure of exactly what the plan is. Will follow up and find out an update.
- Lois McCafferty: What about the house on Brookline Blvd that's fenced in?
 - It's for sale, but it's also condemned (unsafe to live in). Unsure.
- Alex Toner: Are there other things that came up in the resident survey that Brookline Together can work on?
 - Cigarette receptacles -- on it
 - Banners along the Blvd – Beautification will discuss
 - More non-Italian restaurants and non-smoking bars – Red's is now open for drinks and will soon open their kitchen for food; the former Brookline Pub/Fredo's is being reopened as another bar/restaurant but unsure what the concept of the space is
- Brock Boutwell: When can we share more information about the apiary space?
 - Caitlin McNulty: Soon; we can put an article in the March Brookline Now newsletter
- Alex Toner: Can we get the city's Dept of Mobility and Infrastructure to share the results of the information/concerns brought up by residents at the November 2019 meeting?
 - Caitlin McNulty: I've reached out; we're waiting to hear back
 - Blake Plavchak: Working on getting that information
- Michele Traficante: Do you work on public safety at all, or do you leave that to Brookline Block Watch?
 - Caitlin McNulty: We review their minutes and are absolutely willing to help if there's anything we could help with. So far, nothing's come up, and they do a wonderful job.
 - Blake Plavchak: They meet tomorrow night (1/14) at 7pm at District Magistrate's office on Brookline Blvd. (And every 2nd Tuesday of every month)
- Lisa Peach: I noticed that, in Beechview, they have large signs welcoming specific new businesses to the neighborhood. Is that something we could consider?
 - (General consensus): Yes, absolutely! Like a Welcome Wagon for businesses. We will work on moving that forward.

Additional Questions, Comments, Concerns

- Bill Kim: Brookline Together board members now have personalized e-mail addresses ([firstnamelastname@brooklinetogether.org](mailto:firstname.lastname@brooklinetogether.org)), so anyone should be able to reach out to us easily.
- Announcements:
 - Leah Friedman from Office of Community Affairs at City of Pittsburgh:
 - Snow Angels program is up and running for this winter. Postcards are available to take/pass out to people who may be available to sign up. In Brookline, there

is a large disparity between the number of people who need assistance and the number of people who volunteer to help, so we are in desperate need of volunteers. Right now there are several neighbors signed up who haven't been matched with a volunteer yet. You can call 311 or go to pittsburghpa.gov/snowangels to sign up.

- PWSA is continuing to work on free private lead line replacements for income-qualified individuals. The income requirements have recently changed, so it's possible that you may be eligible even if you weren't previously eligible. Flyers were provided to meeting attendees with more information.
- Christmas Tree Recycling is available at the Brookline Recreation Center through January 26, 2020. Dropoff times were provided on a flyer to meeting attendees. The Dept of Public Works will turn the trees into mulch, which will be freely available to community residents in the spring 2020.
- 2020 Census is gearing up, and they are looking to hire individuals in the area for part-time and full-time positions. They recently increased the hourly rate. They're looking for people who know their neighbors and are comfortable knocking on doors.
- Blake Plavchak from Councilman Coghill's office:
 - The City of Pittsburgh's electrical contractor has repaired all except 1 of the lights that were out at Brookline Recreation Center. There is 1 that needs to be fully replaced, and they're working on that.
 - The Councilman's office is working on adding more lighting at the Rec Center; there's money in the capital budget for that
 - There is money approved for a new District 4 Public Works site (presently District 4 does not have a site). The City is working on purchasing the last piece of property necessary. This will be right across the street from McKinley Park, in the same site as the previous building that was structurally unsafe. A site analysis will be completed in early spring 2020 re: environmental variables, and then construction will start afterward. Hopeful that construction will conclude by the end of 2020. This will be greatly helpful in snow removal in our district.
 - The 2nd outlet at the Cannon will be installed after the winter weather breaks. (They need to trench underneath)
- Maeve McNulty is selling Girl Scout Cookies and will sit at the table with the signup sheet for interested parties. There's a new lemon cookie this year.

Special Election

- Votes were tallied for the election of Brookline Together Vice President and Community Events chair. Congratulations to our new officers!
 - Vice-President: Blake Plavchak
 - Community Events chair: Melissa Kilmer

Community meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m. (motion by Bill Kim, seconded by Brock Boutwell, all in favor.)

Next meeting:

- Next community meeting Monday, March 9th 7:00pm, Brookline Teen Outreach