

Brookline Together

Board Meeting Minutes: December 5, 2018

7:00 pm Brookline Teen Outreach

Board Officers:

President:	Caitlin McNulty	Membership:	Lois McCafferty
Vice-President:	Bill Kim	Business Development:	Jason Tigano
Secretary:	Ally Bove	Community Development:	Geri Roberts
Treasurer:	Annette Ferrieri	Beautification:	Tony Griffith
Newsletter:	Brock Boutwell		

Attendance:

Board members present: Brock Boutwell, Ally Bove, Annette Ferrieri, Tony Griffith, Lois McCafferty, Caitlin McNulty, Geri Roberts, Jason Tigano

Board members absent: Bill Kim

Proceedings:

Meeting called to order at 7:18 pm by Board President Caitlin McNulty.

Approval of prior minutes:

Not applicable; this is the first meeting of the newly-elected Brookline Together board.

Old Business:

Not applicable; this is the first meeting of the newly-elected Brookline Together board.

New Business:

Immediate Items

- Quickbooks: Board members agreed to set up Quickbooks to track the organization's financial records; the cost is \$50 per year for an online version of Quickbooks for nonprofit organizations. The Treasurer (A. Ferrieri) and two other people will have access. C. McNulty will ask Bill Kim to set it up, because he has a background in accounting and could likely do it easily.
- Need to set up a DBA – in order for Brookline Together to register with the city's new RCO legislation (see below for more info), we need to be listed as a 501c3. It was previously agreed that for the sake of simplicity, Brookline Together would simply retain South Pittsburgh Development Corporation's (SPDC) 501c3 status and change our paperwork to reflect that SPDC is now "doing business as" Brookline Together. C. McNulty will follow up with Ryan Askey from SPDC to facilitate this, with a goal of completing the necessary paperwork by January 2019.
- File sharing – C. McNulty made a Dropbox and will "share" the folder with the other eight board members
- Mail – both SPDC and the Chamber of Commerce have PO boxes. It was agreed that the Chamber's mailbox will be phased out over time, and Brookline Together will take over the SPDC mailbox. A. Bove will be responsible for collecting the mail. C. McNulty will give her the key to the mailbox, and A. Bove will work with the post office to change the name of the organization on the PO Box.

RCO Guidelines and Negative Press

- Brookline Together aims to apply to be Brookline's Registered Community Organization in accordance with recently-passed City Council legislation. The city intends to have only one RCO per neighborhood.
- The board discussed challenges to the city and neighborhoods that currently have multiple 501c3 nonprofit organizations. This will likely not be a problem for Brookline, as the former SPDC is the only known 501c3 claiming to represent Brookline.
- The application from the city is only 2 pages in length and mostly asks for information that we already have available. C. McNulty will complete the application and also ask Councilman Coghill for a letter of support, which is also necessary to accompany the application.

Newsletter

- A brief discussion was held about the future of the Newsletter. B. Boutwell stated that he is waiting to receive some financial information from a colleague; right now he is unsure of the exact number that are printed each month, how many are placed in businesses vs. mailed to homes, and the total cost per copy.
- It was discussed that it may be prudent to limit the number of printed copies to as few as possible to save money on printing. In addition, it may make sense to *only* place physical copies in two or three locations – suggestions included State Sen. Fontana's office, the Medicine Shoppe, and District Judge Motznik's office (these three would ensure that there are printed copies available within each major block of the business district).
- B. Boutwell will put together a package to try to drum up new advertisers for the newsletter.

Membership Structure

- Membership Chair L. McCafferty has begun working on a membership application and suggests charging \$75 for a business membership and \$25 for an individual membership.
- Business membership: \$75. Will include similar “perks” to BCC business membership, including voting rights, plaques/stickers for in the window of the business, opportunity to participate in community events and fundraisers, etc.
- Individual memberships: \$25. Will include voting rights for annual board elections as well as any “perks” listed below ----
- “Friends of Brookline Together” membership: \$10 or \$15. Will include subscription to the newsletter and perhaps another perk (such as a bumper sticker or t-shirt). Will not include voting rights. This may be ideal for individuals who want to support the organization but do not feel they have the time to participate in the organization.
- Discussion was tabled pending learning more financial information about the cost of providing mailed newsletter subscriptions.

Survey

- Brookline Together intends to create an open-ended survey to query Brookline residents and business owners about their perceptions of the neighborhood, what’s going well, what needs improvement, etc.
- Methods of deploying this survey: sending postcards to every home in Brookline with the web address to take the survey, using existing MailChimp mailing lists to send link to a survey to everyone on the SPDC and Brookline Chamber of Commerce (BCC) e-mail lists, using social media.
- J. Tigano stated that he has a list of approximately 60 potential questions that have been researched and validated. He will send this list to all board members to review and discuss at the next meeting.

Bank Accounts / Checks

- Presently, both SPDC and BCC were using checks that only required one signature, but best practices call for a two-signature requirement. All board members agreed to change to a 2-signature check. We can have up to three signatories, which traditionally consist of the Treasurer, President, and Secretary. A Ferrieri, C. McNulty, and A. Bove agreed to serve as signatories.
- A. Ferrieri will set up a new bank account for Brookline Together at Community Bank, and then will work with the outgoing treasurers of SPDC and BCC to work on how to combine funds.

Newsletter

- A brief discussion was held about the future of the Newsletter. B. Boutwell stated that he is waiting to receive some financial information from a colleague who also worked on the newsletter until recently; right now he is unsure of the exact number that are printed each month, how many are placed in businesses vs. mailed to homes, and the total cost per copy.
- It was discussed that it may be prudent to limit the number of printed copies to as few as possible to save money on printing. In addition, it may make sense to *only* place physical copies in two or three locations – suggestions included State Sen. Fontana’s office, the Medicine Shoppe, and District Judge Motznik’s office (these three would ensure that there are printed copies available within each major block of the business district).

Website

- The website is up at brooklinetogether.org. Tony Griffith will continue to work on it. A few items were discussed that will need to be added to the website, including a link to the survey (discussed above), link to our social media pages, link to sign up for the Brookline newsletter, and links to meeting minutes and agendas. (A website with links to meeting minutes and agendas is also required by the city’s RCO legislation.)
- T. Griffith, C. McNulty, and A. Bove will work together to merge the SPDC and BCC Facebook pages onto the Brookline Together Facebook page, so we don’t lose all the followers.

Goals for the New Organization

- The group unanimously agreed to table this discussion until after the survey is deployed and results are available. It would not be prudent to set goals without input from as many community members as possible.

Meeting Schedule

- Board members agreed to have meetings on the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at Brookline Teen Outreach. This is consistent with BCC’s prior meeting schedule.
- The following meeting schedule was agreed-upon:
 - Public meetings: 2nd Monday of odd-numbered months (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sept, Nov) at 7:00 p.m. at Brookline Teen Outreach
 - Committee (non-public) meetings: to be held during even-numbered months (Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec); 2 options
 - Could host the 2nd Monday at 7:00 p.m. at Brookline Teen Outreach
 - Depending on the needs/preferences of committee members, could also host any other date/time/location that is convenient for all who need to attend
 - Committee meeting schedules will be at the discretion of the committee chair.

Calendar of Events and Timelines for 2019

- January
 - None scheduled at this time
- February
 - Bar Crawl fundraiser – date TBD
- March
 - None scheduled at this time
- April
 - Brunch in Bloom fundraiser – date TBD; last event was April 7, 2018
 - Neighborhood clean-up day – possibly Earth Day weekend
- May
 - Traditionally, BCC has sent a representative to meetings about the Memorial Day Parade; Brookline Together will continue doing so if the organizing committee is open to having a representative continue to attend and assist
- June
 - Community Yard Sale – first Saturday in June (G. Roberts will check with Lisa Wilson to enquire whether she wants to continue organizing this event)
 - Art on the Boulevard – last Saturday in June
- July
 - None scheduled at this time
- August
 - Brookline Breezefest – Saturday, August 10, 2019 (after the Brookline Breeze 5K)
- September
- October
 - Neighborhood clean-up day – will schedule to coincide with Pitt’s Make A Difference Day, which enables us to have dozens of additional volunteers
 - Halloween Parade
- November
 - Brookline Lights Up events and Holly Jolly Tasting fundraiser – Saturday after Thanksgiving
- December
 - None scheduled at this time
- OTHER: C. McNulty reported that she has been approached by a few gentlemen from the community who are planning a Community Day type of event to honor the 80th anniversary of Moore Park. Councilman Coghill’s office and the city are willing to lend their support to this event. A date has not yet been set. J. Tigano volunteered to be Brookline Together’s “point person” to represent the organization in the planning of this community event.

Contracts and Codes of Conduct

- Each board member is required to sign a board member contract and code of conduct. C. McNulty e-mailed these to all members earlier this week; each member should sign them and return them via e-mail or in person to A. Bove.

Potential Grant Opportunities

- T. Griffith reported that he has been in talks with Neil Manganaro from Pennsylvania American Water, who states that the company has money to fund small grants (\$1,500-10,000) for environmental projects that will help the neighborhood. There is no particular deadline, but the 2018 money needs to be used. Unfortunately, Brookline Together will not have its 501c3 status officially changed over from SPDC in time, so we cannot apply for this opportunity in 2018. T. Griffith will remain in touch with Mr. Manganaro about opportunities for 2019.
- Neighborhood Allies Catalytic Grants – this was originally listed on the agenda as \$15,000-\$75,000 grants, but J. Tigano stated that Brookline is not one of the neighborhoods that is eligible for that level of grant. However, Brookline would be eligible to apply for smaller \$5,000 grants. Unfortunately, the deadline is 12/31/18 and again we cannot apply for this opportunity this year. Will follow up on this for 2019 opportunities.
- Potential projects were very briefly discussed, including: neighborhood welcoming signs in spaces that don't currently have them (e.g. coming up the hill on Sussex Ave, entering Brookline via Pioneer Avenue near the Liberty Tunnel) or improving existing neighborhood welcoming areas (e.g. Jacob and Whited); addition of a dog park (A. Bove has been in touch with Councilman Coghill's office about what this would entail and will follow up in the new year),
- J. Tigano stated that he would like to pursue small grant opportunities and then find matching funds from larger organizations (such as the Urban Redevelopment Authority or private foundations)
- This discussion was tabled to a later date, because Brookline Together needs to complete the paperwork to officially be listed as a 501c3 before it can apply for any funding for neighborhood projects.

Executive Secretary / Staff Position

- L. McCafferty distributed a list of the duties of the former Executive Secretary for BCC and asked whether it will be wise to hire an Exec Secretary or staff person for Brookline Together.
- Board members discussed that it may be also be beneficial to use a staff person to assist with some of the bookkeeping duties for the Newsletter, and agreed this will be further discussed at a later meeting.
- A. Ferrieri pointed out that Brookline Together does not yet have a budget, so it is difficult to discern whether a paid position is possible at this time. A. Bove stated that she would review the duties and determine whether they are generally reasonable for a volunteer board secretary to complete, or whether they should be split amongst several volunteer board members, or better for a paid staff position.
- It was discussed that, after Brookline Together receives official RCO status, it will make the organization eligible for some local funding that could help to pay for a staff member.
- Discussion was tabled for a later meeting, pending development of the organization's budget and further information about the needs of the organization.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. following a motion by C. McNulty, seconded by T. Griffith, and unanimously approved by all present.

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Ally Bove.