**Brookline Together**

**Board Meeting Minutes: August 12, 2019**

**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: Heather Fulton

Treasurer: Bill Kim Beautification: Tony Griffith

Newsletter: Brock Boutwell

**Attendance:**

Board members present: Brock Boutwell, Ally Bove, Heather Fulton, Lois McCafferty, Caitlin McNulty, Jason Tigano.

Board members absent: Bill Kim (excused), Tony Griffith (excused)

Committee Vice Chairs present: Sami Melhorn (Membership), Blake Plavchak (Beautification), Lisa Peach (Beautification), Melissa Kilmer (Community Events), Alex Toner (Business Development)

**Proceedings:**

*Meeting called to order* at 7:01 pm by Board President Caitlin McNulty.

*Approval of prior minutes:*

Prior minutes from July 8, 2019 community meeting were shared with board members prior to tonight’s meeting. Motion to approve both sets of minutes: Lois McCafferty, second: Jason Tigano. Unanimous vote to approve both sets of minutes.

*Correspondence*

* E-mail from a BT member with multiple questions:
	+ Question 1: Can Brookline Together get more details re: the capital budget request from Councilman Coghill’s office re: improving pedestrian safety along Brookline Blvd?
		- Answer: We haven’t asked for more details since we don’t know if it’ll be approved or not, but Blake Plavchak is here and can respond. They tried to focus primarily on infrastructure needs in District 4. Items being requested pertaining to Brookline:
			* Buyouts of properties along Provost Rd & Route 88 that flood every time it storms
			* Pedestrian safety and traffic calming along Brookline Blvd
			* Lights for Brookline field
			* Funding to demolish condemned buildings in District 4
			* Redo intersection of Whited and Gallupe
			* Playground updates
			* Concession stand at deck hockey rink at Memorial Park
	+ Question 2: What effort is Brookline Together making to acquire new trash cans and recycling, especially along the business district?
		- Answer: We have consistently asked, but the city doesn’t provide them. Unfortunately if Brookline Together purchases them, we would also be responsible for maintenance and emptying them. The city typically states that they are unable to provide enough staffing for maintenance of additional receptacles. Beautification Committee will continue work and advocacy in this area.
	+ Question 3: Is anything being done at the intersection of McNeilly and Midland?
		- Answer: That intersection is in Mt. Lebanon and they have declined to do anything about it, and neither Pittsburgh nor Dormont have the authority to do anything about it. During the beginning of construction of the senior building at that intersection, residents went to Mt. Lebanon’s meetings to advocate for Brookline but they did not appear to listen.
	+ Question 4: Can we obtain statistics and disseminate to BT members, such as crime statistics, 311 statistics, information from Port Authority, etc?
		- Answer: Caitlin has tried to obtain this type of information but we can work on building better relationships to be able to obtain this information more quickly. Brookline Block Watch always has the crime statistics

*Treasurer’s Report – Bill Kim (e-mailed)*

* Main account $31,020.39
* Newsletter account $4,614.64
* Paypal account $3,500 is in the process being transferred to the main account + $406.63 remaining in the Paypal account
* Total net income 2019 to date: $3,895.41 as of July 8 (so this doesn’t include most of the money that came in for Breezefest)
* Total assets $36,886.99 as of July 8

*Newsletter Report – Brock Boutwell*

* September issue is wrapping up; will be sent out for layout tomorrow. Will be 16 pages Has a recap of Breezefest, an article from Ally Bove re: the community survey.
* Will have new committee members referred by Lois McCafferty
* Instagram account is growing! 42 new followers yesterday after a post about Breezefest
* Would like an accounting of Newsletter incoming funds since 1/1/19, particularly of advertisers, just to make sure all records are accurate re: monies owed to/from advertisers.
* Heather Fulton volunteered to write an article about Brookline Lights Up for the November issue
* Due date for content for November issue will be October 11
* Brock will get in touch with Ally re: distribution to better coordinate paper-copy distribution with electronic distribution
* Paper copies of the July issue were all gone quickly at Cogo’s, 802 Bean, Medicine Shoppe, A-Boss. There were a few remaining at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Brookline Teen Outreach, so we will reduce the number there
* Will be printing 750 copies moving forward

*Membership – Lois McCafferty*

* Looking into cutting costs of printing Brookline Business Directories. Will also reach out to previous advertisers to see if they’ll continue advertising to cover the costs.
* We should consider using the same online printer that the Newsletter committee is using if it’s going to save a lot. Brock will contact them to get a quote on 1,000-1,500 copies.
* Lisa Peach also has a South Hills printer to recommend; she will send their contact information to Lois.
* Sami has created a Google spreadsheet with all of the businesses in the neighborhood, and Linda and Melissa are going to update it and keep it updated
* The group agreed that the directory needs to exist online (on our website) and be constantly updated
* The group also agreed that it would be good to put BT’s calendar of events in the directory as well
* We had a table at Breezefest. 20 business directories were gone quickly; more were handed out throughout the day. No one signed up for any committees, but many people did take membership information. Lots of people were asking where they can get Brookline Together volunteer t-shirts.
	+ We can use this as a membership incentive or fundraiser

*Business Development – Jason Tigano*

* Looking For Group is in the process of purchasing the former PNC building on Brookline Boulevard. Upon Brookline Together’s request, Mayor Peduto made a phone call to PNC to express his support for the sale to LFG.
* After the last community meeting, some people brought up a specific building along Brookline Blvd with questionable activity. The police investigated and ultimately evicted the tenants and warned the landlord. Another nuisance property along Brookline Blvd is under investigation.
* The committee has created a master list of businesses in the neighborhood, the building owner, the current tenant, etc. The committee will look for ways to highlight and incentivize businesses that are deemed to be an asset to the community. The committee is also looking for ways to highlight and market vacant space, perhaps with pop-up shops
* 311 and PLI are looking into a vacant space between buildings along Brookline Blvd that consistently has trash
* No updates on the space that housed Fredo’s.
* Work has started on the former Zippy’s bar, now owned by Parker’s. This space may open in the fall of 2019.
* Jason Tigano has a meeting with the parking authority to improve signage at the Mazza Pavilion parking garage so people can become more aware that those spaces exist as a parking option

*Community Events – Heather Fulton*

* Halloween Parade: October 26th
* Brookline Lights Up: November 30th
	+ Also want to push Small Business Saturday
	+ No Holly Jolly Tasting event this year
	+ Now that the cannon has electric outlets, we can go all out at the triangle park. The city and Caitlin will have the only keys to the outlet.
	+ Heather Fulton will plan a Lights Up-specific committee meeting, and we’ll post on social media and our e-mail list to recruit people helping
* Christmas party for Brookline Together – Monday, December 9th early evening. The board will work on planning.
* Breezefest: we had over 60 vendors sign up. 6 didn’t show up (but they had paid, so...). One food truck did not show up. Excellent feedback for the glass-blowing demonstration. People loved the farmer’s market. Vendors generally gave good feedback – they exceeded expectations re: sales, and they felt that the organization supported them. 5 raffle baskets made $716.
	+ There were also several vendors at the park sponsoring the race – Penn American handed out water, Animal Friends was there with animals, and some others
	+ St. Mark’s church also had a flea market event and a band, so it wasn’t a conflict with any of the Breezefest activities. In the future, we’ll try to coordinate with them to help cross-promote their events on that day
	+ A local record label would like to put up a stage for next year – which will require us to close part of the Boulevard. Melissa will reach out to Special Events right away to begin planning for next year.
	+ If we go with music and a large stage and such for next year, we should increase our advertising – consider asking Lamar for free or reduced price billboards; advertising in City Paper; etc.
	+ Would we consider increasing consistency in appearance by supplying tables and signs?
		- We’d have to increase cost to do that, and right now our costs are high enough that vendors are probably not willing to provide any more.
		- But we can try to provide some guidance on what we recommend for vendors’ displays. We can also provide photos of successful / attractive vendor displays from prior years and hope that future vendors will use that to guide them.
	+ Can we offer table tents with vendor names and BT logos to the local businesses that set up tables in front of their businesses?
		- Yes – will bring it up at the next committee meeting
	+ If we can’t afford to close the entire road, can we buy out parking for a couple of blocks to increase the amount of space people can hang out in?
		- Yes – will consider this for next year. Some vendors asked if they could be set up within the parking spaces and face the businesses, so we will look into this last year
	+ Blake will check to find out if the outlets at the cannon are strong enough to support having bands

*Beautification – Blake Plavchak and Lisa Peach*

* Update on cigarette receptacles, which we received from a grant:
	+ Duquesne Light said that they will not allow us to put cigarette receptacles on their utility poles. It’s a hard “no” from them.
	+ We can apply to the city for an “encroachment” to mount the receptacles onto city posts (stop signs, parking signs, etc). We have to write a letter of request to explain what we want and why, and pay a $150 application fee. Blake can ask Councilman Coghill to support. We need a petition signed and notarized by the applicant and the property owner (will check to see if that means the building owners, or if property owner simply refers to the city as the owner of the signs/poles). We need insurance that covers public liability $100K-300K and property damage $50K (to cover if, theoretically, a receptacle were to catch on fire). Typically takes 3 months to review, but if the size of the encroachment is minimal (which ours is), it can occur faster.
* Pioneer sidewalks – trees were lifting the sidewalk. At first, residents were advised to call 311 anytime the tree in front of their sidewalk was lifting. This backfired, and people began to receive fines for poor sidewalk conditions. Although residents are ultimately responsible for the sidewalks in front of their houses, the city wanted to help since they initially planted those trees, so they offered to remove the trees/roots from in front of any household that opted in. The city has now removed the trees and tree roots from all residents who opted in, and the sidewalks are ready for repair. The Councilman’s office helped to combine many households into 1 permit and to expedite their partial reimbursements they’ll receive from the city.
* Gateway signage – cost per sign of $50. This will need to be approved by the board. The board asked for the committee to create a proposal re: what the sign will look like, proposed locations, and total project cost.
* Trees along Brookline Blvd were trimmed the week before Breezefest.
* 6 people attended the post-Breezefest cleanup event on Sunday 8/11. The committee stated that the vendors did a nice job cleaning up after themselves.

*Update on Burgh Bees Apiary (C. McNulty)*:

* We gave a deadline of today (8/12/19) re: lot clearing, and it isn’t done. So at this point, the organization will not be paying the company that we hired to clear the lot. Unless something changes, we’ll have to hire another company. This company had also offered to maintain the lot – so that probably won’t work out. We have someone to mow the area in the meantime, and we will continue talking to Plantscape about this perhaps being part of their scope of work starting in 2020.
* Once the lot is cleared, Burgh Bees will come do the site work and prepare for utilities.
* URA has a pilot grant available. Brookline Together can apply to this program to pay for the water and electric line. The deadline is October 1. Caitlin has begun working on the proposal but needs some additional documentation. Brookline Together will have to pay up front, and URA will reimburse.
* There is a Boy Scout who would like to build planter beds at the site for pollinator plants as his Eagle Scout project.
* Goal: have bees at the site by spring.
* Motion by J. Tigano to authorize up to $1,500 for lot clearing by any of the companies that have provided bids. Second by A. Bove. All in favor (unanimous).

*General Discussion Re: Reporting and Committee Workload*

* Need to have committee members sign the Code of Conduct to ensure that the organization is represented well at all times. Caitlin is glad to answer questions about this.
* Need to improve reporting of committee meetings so everyone knows what’s happening within each committee and improving cross-committee communication
* Each committee is going to create a timeline of committee meetings, events the committee is planning, etc. This will help committee members know what they’re committing to.
* Consider spacing out community events and having fewer of them each year
* Consider a few large beautification days instead of small monthly beautification events
* Consider reducing the number of public meetings to once quarterly and publish a narrative of organizational goings-on in the interim, vs. simply continuing public meetings every 2 months but opening meeting structure up for more discussion throughout the meeting instead of saving questions for the end.
	+ Group consensus was to continue public meetings every 2 months but work hard to open the lines of communication to all attendees throughout the meeting, to make the meeting more discussion-based.
* Should we open board meetings up to all committee members, not just board members and vice-chairs?
	+ Differing opinions on this – some think the meetings should be open to everyone working on a committee; some think the board meetings should be kept to just chairs and vice-chairs to minimize meeting length and maintain confidentiality
	+ Will explore/discuss this within committees and revisit at the next board meeting; will add to the agenda for the next board meeting
* C. McNulty introduced a motion to spend $1,500 to do 6 training sessions with a consultant (Civic Square, LLC) to help with board development and organizational/committee strategic planning. Chairs and vice chairs would be present but we would also open it up to other committee members who aren’t chair/vice-chair but contribute to the organization and would benefit from this training. Motion: J. Tigano; Seconded: B. Boutwell. All in favor (unanimous). Caitlin will contact consultant re: scheduling and determine when to start.
* Paid secretary – L. McCafferty would like to consider hiring a paid executive secretary. Chamber was paying theirs $125 per month.
	+ Each committee chair needs to determine what tasks they would pass along to a paid secretary, what skills are required for those tasks, and how many hours per month they estimate those tasks would take.
	+ Caitlin will organize gathering this information and bringing it back to the next board meeting

*Other Comments/Concerns*

* A bicyclist was seriously injured on Pioneer Ave after being hit by a car last weekend. Should Brookline Together be doing something to approach the difficult/controversial topic of bicycle safety for people who commute to/from downtown?
	+ Bike Pittsburgh did a presentation at a recent Zone 6 Public Safety meeting. We can ask the head of Zone 6 Public Safety to come speak to a Brookline Together meeting, and perhaps bring someone from Bike Pittsburgh
	+ Fun fact: Luke Ravenstahl installed more miles of bike lanes than Bill Peduto. (Proof is on Bike Pittsburgh’s website!)
* The “About” page for Brookline Together is an image of all white/Caucasian hands, which is not terribly inclusive or reflective of the community. General consensus: we’ll change that! We apologize for this oversight.

*Next Meeting – Community Meeting, Monday September 9, 2019.*

Motion to adjourn (J. TIgano), seconded (B. Boutwell). Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.