

**Minutes for COUNCIL ON AGING Meeting  
May 11, 2016**

**Present:** COA Members: Agnes Rogers, Barbara Scotto, Yolanda Rodriguez, Claire Lurie, John Mulhane, Peter Ames, Roberta Winitzer, Barbara Kean, Vera Sharma, Rita d'Entremont, Jean Doherty, Helen Lew, Phil Fullerton, Phyllis Bram, Nancy Daly, Alberta Lipson, Irving Finn, William Wong and Sherry Lee. Muriel Stark, Miriam Sargon and Doris Toby Axelrod called to say that they were unable to attend. Staff: Ruthann Dobek, Julie Washburn, Jamie Donchin, Susan Kanian-Andriole and Patricia Burns. Public: Monique Richardson, Clara Chin, Claire Slater, Carol Fullerton, Akemi Minami, and others.

**Call to Order:** Mrs. Agnes Rogers called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

**Acceptance of the Minutes of April 13, 2016:** It was so moved and seconded to accept the Minutes of the April 13, 2016 COA meeting.

**Introduction of Guest Speakers:** Mrs. Rogers introduced the guest speakers for today:  
**Susan Kanian-Andriole & Jamie Donchin, Brookline Council on Aging HELP Program**  
**Topic: Dementia Programs at the Council on Aging**

Susan began by saying that these programs were for Brookline seniors 60 and over. The original Respite Program at Brookline Senior Center (BSC) ran from 2005-2009. It was a very successful grant funded program formed to address the growing epidemic of Alzheimer's and Dementia that served about 50 families. Susan noted some statistics: Alzheimer's is the 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of all deaths; 1 in 3 seniors die of either Alzheimer's or dementia; 15 million caregivers provide 18.1 billion hours of unpaid care; and every 60 seconds another person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia.

Susan then expressed thanks to Nancy Daly for her participation in Dancing With The Stars that raised new funds to restart the program which is now called the CARE Program. Susan gave Nancy a bouquet of flowers as thanks for her efforts. These funds are available to 10 families to receive 30 hours each of respite care on a flexible schedule. The 1<sup>st</sup> recipient is a retired Brookline fire fighter who had a stroke. His wife has been his caregiver and had been homebound caring for him for many months. Using the CARE hours, a vetted gentleman caregiver provided respite care. She was delighted to go shopping, have lunch with her sister and even gave a neighborhood child a piano lesson. She felt that after having a break, she is able to give more to her husband's care.

Susan said that they have three families so far, but are looking for more and would be happy to get referrals from any of us for others who might be in need. CARE also has \$200 emergency funds available.

Susan spoke of two long-standing (11 year) support groups – one in the evening for adult children giving care to their parents & another during the day for spouses who are caregivers.

Jamie then said that in addition to the HELP & CARE programs for memory challenged seniors, another program is the Memory Café. It is a welcoming social gathering for memory challenged seniors and their care partners geared for social enjoyment. The concept of Memory Cafes started in Holland in the late 1990s, spread throughout Europe and came to the US in 2008. Jewish Family and Children's Services formed a network directory with many sites throughout Massachusetts. Meeting sites include private homes, offices, organizations and other facilities. She explained that the strategy used is expressive therapy – interactive music, art, dancing, etc. The Brookline Senior Chorus provided the activity recently and even gave the participants song booklets. In 2015, we held the Memory Cafes quarterly, but in 2016 they are now held every month. Jamie was pleased to report that she has artists signed up for the entire 2016 year. She also said that because there are many cafes around the state, some people attend more than one café each month. She did say that if a person requires personal care, they must attend with their care giver as we do not have PCAs to provide this assistance at the meetings. Jamie starts the meetings with ice breakers and suggested questions to start conversations are available on the tables.

Funding options were discussed: grant money for refreshments and materials; in-kind support such as use of the building; and co-sponsorship by home care organizations and assisted living facilities that help pay and create sharing partnerships. The Brookline Community Foundation awarded a grant to the Memory Café program as a SPOTLIGHT Grant to help with the costs.

One aim of the Memory Café is to grow an intergenerational volunteer base. Others include: bringing people together with a common bond; providing resources; experience sharing and keeping memory challenged seniors in the dementia friendly community as long as possible.

Right now there are 20-30 attendees per meeting. Jamie said that while meetings are usually scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month here at BSC, in August, the meeting will be on the 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month due to a care giver support group. Upcoming meetings including the activity for that month, special events such as the Alzheimer's Walk in September and the Goddard Walking Group are advertised at the BSC, in the Newsletter & Brookline TAB and around the town. She also added that we are looking for a new Captain of the BSC Alzheimer's Walk team this year as well as walkers and contributors.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Springwell – Yolanda Rodriguez:** Yolanda passed out the Spring Springwell Source newsletter. She directed our attention to the article on page 2 and quoted alarming statistics from the American Association of Suicidology that says “the group most at risk for suicide in the US is the elderly. In 2010 there were about 16 suicides each day of those 65 and older which resulted in a total of 5,994 deaths”. Springwell is conducting training for all their social workers on risk factors and suicide prevention.

**Nominating Committee** – no report

**Library - Roberta Winitzer:** Roberta reported on the pending upgrade, expansion or construction for the Coolidge Corner Library. Since there will be many construction projects occurring in the summer – Devotion School, Kehillath Israel, and the Jewish Community Housing for Elders – the Coolidge Corner Library project will be postponed and revisited in three years. She said that the Massachusetts Library Oversight Committee has grants for library

redesign and agreed to have Brookline further down on the list. She also said that feedback for any library issues can be given to the reference or circulation desks of all of our libraries.

Roberta mentioned an event in the main library on May 12 between 6:45 and 8:15. It is a poetry reading and discussion session for grandparents and their grandchildren. At least two poets will be present for the discussion.

Roberta also recommended her current read – “My Brilliant Friend” which has been translated from Italian. It is about three women friends and is part of a series of books about these three women.

**Budget Committee:** Ruthann and Nancy Daly reported on results of recent Town elections. The majority of the Board members were re-elected. After winning re-election in the Town election on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Neil Wishinsky was re-elected to Chair the Board of Selectmen at the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. We received assurance that Nancy would continue as our liaison, for which we are all grateful. Ruthann took a minute to thank Nancy for all her hard work on our behalf. The Community Development block was approved that includes our BETS Discount Taxi Program and JOBS Program. Ruthann noted that most of the Town officials ran unopposed and urged us to think of running next year.

#### **Director’s Report:**

- **TAB article:** Ruthann called attention to the recent article in the Brookline TAB, ‘Some Serious Lagtime’. In the article she pointed out that the COA was named as one of the best in posting both agenda and minutes in a timely fashion. Ruthann gave kudos to Patricia Burns for performing this part of her job. She also said that as public record, it is very important to have all Town committees’ and Departments’ minutes posted not only as evidence of what is currently happening, but for historical purposes.
- **Other Articles Available:**
  - **Brookline Age Friendly City Program Biannual Report: 2014-2015:** Ruthann urged everyone to take and read the report.
  - **Aging in Place:** New York Times article by Jane Brody.
  - **Plan for Senior Boom:** Cape Cod Times article regarding Assisted Living Facilities.
  - **Seven Things to Know About Isolation:** AARP Foundation by Becky Squires.
- **CDBG Grants for 2017:** Ruthann noted that the rate of \$25 purchase of \$50 of BETS discount taxi coupons per month had remained the same since at least 2001. With inflation, this is no longer a useful amount. There is a need to support this non-profit to hopefully increase the monthly allowable amount.
- **Older Americans Act:** The aim of this act is to get money for Federal programs such as Meals On Wheels in communities. It is hoped that approval will be given for funding for food and dementia programs.
- **BETS:** A question was asked about the BETS coupons. Ruthann confirmed that while only Brookline cabs can be used, the cab ride can go to other towns. For return rides, one needs to make sure and get a Brookline cab in order to use the discounted coupon.

### **Program Updates:**

- **Driving Retirement:** On Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> there will be a meeting, Preparing for Driving Retirement. It will discuss when and issues around retiring from driving. Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital will have a representative present who will discuss their driving assessment. Brookline Police Department and doctors will also be participating in the meeting.
- **Programs at BSC:**
  - **Climate Change Presentation** –May 12 @ 1:00 pm
  - **Telling Your Story** – May 25<sup>th</sup> @ 10:15 am
  - **Marie Lavin Concert** – June 9<sup>th</sup> @ 2 pm

**Bay State Federal Savings Charitable Foundation:** Ruthann asked Patricia to read a letter from the foundation. Enclosed with the letter was a donation of \$1,000 to assist the Fitness Program at the BSC. They also thanked Ruthann and the staff for their passion and commitment to the Senior Center and wished all of our seniors the best of health.

### **New Fitness Programs at BSC:**

- **Expanded Ping Pong:** The program has grown exponentially. The group has collected half of the funds needed for a second table.
- **Bocci (lawn bowling):** There is a piece of tarmac between the BSC and 100 Center Street that will hopefully be converted to a Bocci court.
- **Elder Friendly Parks:** Park equipment, paths and benches that are elder friendly are being installed in Brookline Parks. The first park that will have a soft opening in June is Fisher Hill Park. Ruthann said that we will plan a field trip from the BSC for the official September opening. The next park to be updated will be Griggs Park.

**New School:** Nancy Daly gave a brief update on the new school. She said that they are still discussing the Stop & Shop site. Devotion School renovations will begin this summer.

**Volunteer File Audit:** Ruthann reminded everyone that the annual volunteer file audit is another important process that is required by the Town. It is similar in importance to the posting of minutes. Patricia spoke about the timeline and the need to respond to the forms that are being sent out to individual volunteers whose files have missing or greatly outdated information. She also outlined the volunteer application process and gave examples of applicants who either failed their CORI or who were not appropriate candidates for volunteering at the BSC.

**Mother's Day:** Ruthann urged everyone to remember our mothers and grandmothers and be thankful for their care. She urged us all to smell the lilacs on these choice days as well.

Ruthann thanked Jamie & Susan for their important dementia work and urged all to refer anyone who we know who might need our programs – HELP, CARE or Memory Café.

*Our next COA meeting will be on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016*

Mrs. Rogers asked for a motion to adjourn at 2:00pm. The motion was so moved and seconded.

Respectfully submitted by Patricia Burns