

**Minutes for COUNCIL ON AGING Meeting
September 14, 2016**

Present: COA Members: Agnes Rogers, Barbara Scotto, Yolanda Rodriguez, John Mulhane, Peter Ames, Roberta Winitzer, Barbara Kean, Jean Doherty, Phil Fullerton, Nancy Daly, Doris Toby Axelrod, Jackie Wright, Helen Lew, Sherry Lee, Alberta Lipson and William Wong. Staff: Ruthann Dobek, Julie Washburn, Olga Sliwa, Dotty Bell and Patricia Burns. Public: Clara Chin, Carol Fullerton, Leila Abelow, Ruth Glaser, Mary Lee, Zoe Weinrobe, Elise Selinger, Lula Zelikman, Lilly Platt, Lila Sesholtz, A. Ellstein, Amy Schectman, Allen Seroll, Jerry Fewer, Martha Schieve, Akemi Minami, Kathy Harris and others.

Call to Order: Roberta Winitzer, the new Chair of the COA, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Roberta said that as the new Chair as long as Agnes Rogers was present at meetings, she would feel that “Tinker Bell” was on her shoulder.

Introduction of Guest Speaker: Roberta introduced the guest speaker for today:
Amy Schectman, President & CEO of Jewish Community Housing for Elders (JCHE)

Topic: New Kehillath Israel (KI) Housing

Amy started by explaining that the aim of JCHE is to make sure that no older adult spends the last 15 years of their life in loneliness. JCHE provides connection, service and engagement to seniors who in return provide wisdom, judgement and experience to others in the community. She indicated that some feel that the reason Adam & Eve went astray in the Garden of Eden is because they did not have elders to advise them. She also said that as our age increases, most often our money decreases leading to many seniors being ejected from communities they have invested in for years.

KI plans to consolidate their activities into half of their existing space on Harvard Street between Coolidge Corner and TJMax. The remaining space could meet the demands for quality housing and a platform for senior activity and engagement.

Amy further said that JCHE is working with the Federal HUD Program that has extremely strict rules concerning income for eligibility for subsidized housing. She added that JCHE’s strategic plan is based on making senior housing a village center with a neighborhood-sensitive design. The ground floor will have floor-to-ceiling glass windows and an open area similar to an urban hotel lobby for a café, gym, lecture area, art classes and other large group activities. Amy said that BSC overflow programs that won’t fit into our building could take place in this area as well. The building will also extend out closer to the sidewalk. The height of the housing building will be the same as the dome of KI so as not to impede the view of the façade. There will be a ‘pocket park’ created near the sidewalk and perhaps green space on top of the café.

There are expected to be 62 units – 58-1 bedroom and 4-2 bedroom. When asked why there were so few 2 bedrooms units planned, Amy said that the demand is for 1 bedroom units. She said that there are 50 on the waitlist for 1 bedroom units in JCHE’s Brighton facilities. The 1 bedroom units are between 550-600 sq.ft.

All units are expected to be affordable to seniors. There will be a mix of eligibility levels: approximately 8 units for households at 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI); approximately 42 units for households up to 60% AMI; approximately 8 units for households between 60% and 120% AMI and approximately 4 units for moderate income households with no income eligibility requirement. Amy said that the rent for the units (around \$1,000) does not cover the expenses of the building. As with their other locations, JCHE's private philanthropic funds will supplement rental income. A BSC staff person read a letter of appeal that requested that JCHE work with the Brookline Veterans' Office to assure that they get applications so that elderly veterans in need of housing will be included in the application pool. Amy agreed to reach out to the Brookline Veterans' Office.

Amy then discussed the timeline for the project. She said that it is dependent on the Town and KI that will need the building while they renovate their KI temple. JCHE is in the permitting process with the Town. JCHE has held 6 neighborhood meetings and is refining their plans accordingly. They hope to get final permits in the next few months. However, as of this meeting the expected start of construction is September 2018, which is the same time Devotion School renovations are due to be finished.

Amy said that several rumors have been circulating. One rumor was that Harvard Street would become 1-way. Another was that there would be no windows in the building. She assured us that both are untrue. Selectman Nancy Daly seconded that Harvard Street would NOT become 1-way.

Nancy asked Amy if data regarding isolation versus community and the effects of each on health could be made available. Amy replied that some data indicates that living in a supportive community increases seniors' lives by 5 years and dementia declines by 50%. Nancy said that community senior living with lectures, music, art and events is an integral part of our community.

Amy responded to a question about activities at the new KI site being open to those seniors not living in the building. Amy assured everyone that their programs would be open to seniors in the Brookline community.

Parking was then raised. Amy said that the focus was on green space and amenities rather than parking. Planning includes 14 spaces although William Street neighbors said they thought no spaces should be provided. One attendee suggested that perhaps these spaces could be for ZIP cars so residents would not need to own their own cars, but use these when needed. Amy said that only 10% of their residents in Brighton require parking. Alternate transportation with the van and public transportation will be encouraged. Another suggestion was made to give overnight parking permits to KI residents for the area Town parking lots. When asked about visitor and caregiver parking, Amy said that there are tradeoffs – parking versus green space and community space. Nancy said that the Town is looking into more parking options – underground or 2nd level to existing lots. She urged interested seniors to go to the Zoning Board of Appeal's website and participate in the Planning Department's meetings. Amy noted that underground parking costs about \$80,000/space and is cost prohibitive.

When asked if the rent included any meals, Amy said no, other than having a social worker helping residents sign up for ‘Meals On Wheels’ and SNAP.

A senior asked if there would be a newsletter similar to ours advertising events. Amy said there would be a calendar of activities published.

When asked about the age range at JCHE, Amy noted that at their other locations the range was 65 – 105 and added that only 3% of their residents go to a nursing home. In Brighton the average age is 88 ½, but in all their properties it is 80. However, in a new facility the average age is expected to be younger.

Announcement: Ruthann announced the passing of Irving Finn. Irving was not only a COA member, but was a WW II veteran, a member of the COA Budget Committee and led the Wednesday Retired Men’s Discussion Group. In Irving’s honor, the group is being renamed *Finn’s Foley: A Group of Nothing and Everything*.

BCAN Annual Meeting: Roberta reminded everyone that the BCAN Annual Meeting will be held tomorrow, Thursday, September 15th from 5-7. The focus of the meeting will be Housing in Brookline. Len Fishman will speak about trends and availability. Ruthann said that while the topic of discussion is important, the meeting is a great social affair with wine and dinner.

Handouts: Ruthann urged everyone present to pick up the handouts at the back table. They included: Brookline Senior Center Additional Information for Donations, an article entitled, ‘Ping-Pong Controversy Opens Racial Wounds in Malden’ and Information about the 15th Annual Autumn Benefit honoring Dr. Alan Balsam who is retiring as the Director of Public Health and Human Services in Brookline and a committed supporter of the BSC and senior issues in the Town.

Committee Reports:

Springwell – Ruthann Dobek gave the report for Yolanda Rodriguez: She said that the Busy Bee transport service to Boston Hospitals has received decreased funding. As a result, during the month of September each ride will cost \$15. In October, it is expected to go back to \$4. All were urged to contact Funding for Older Citizens’ Action and Joe Kennedy’s office to assure future funding.

Kathy Harris also mentioned that no Federal funding for SHINE has been approved. Ruthann urged everyone to call the Senate Appropriations Office and Joe Kennedy to ask them to support this funding.

Nominating Committee – no report

Budget Committee – no report

Director’s Report:

Senator Cynthia Creem: Ruthann said that as a result of Nancy Daly’s Dancing With the Stars participation and the Rotary donations, we are able to provide 40 hours of respite care for Alzheimer’s caregivers. She also said that Senator Creem was so impressed with our program

that she included a \$10,000 line item in the State budget. While at this time, the funding is still tentative, we appreciate her efforts on our behalf.

Program Updates:

Brookline Day September 18th @ Larz Anderson

Alzheimer's Walk September 25th: Patricia asked for donations to support the BSC walk team.

Reel in the Closet October 19th @ Coolidge Corner Theater: This is a one-time showing of the film with a reception prior here at the BSC. The regular tickets are \$10, but a few free tickets are available.

Nancy Daly Report on the Brookline New School: Nancy gave the following update. While the decision is not final, it is unlikely that the Stop & Shop site will be chosen as it is too expensive to create commercial and housing space there. The Baldwin School and a 2nd school on the Baker School campus are the favorite options right now.

Nancy also mentioned that next Thursday there will be a meeting of the Board of Selectman on the 6th floor of the Town Hall. On the 28th there will be an open meeting at the Pierce School.

Welcome New Interns: Ruthann asked all to welcome the new Social Work interns: Samantha Schiffman, Claire Burke, Faith Sudbey and Jason Kobayashi.

Van Painting: Ruthann pointed out the very cheerful painting on our newest van. It was painted by Gary Chen, a student in the Lesley University Art School and reflects the happy atmosphere of the BSC and represents many of our activities.

Ralph Perkin's Retirement: Ralph has been the only custodian that this BSC building has had since it opened. His last day will be September 30th – his birthday. We will be having a party, *Perkins Is Leaving the Building*, at 4pm on the 30th. Ruthann urged all to come and say goodbye and wish him well in retirement.

Our next regular COA meeting will be on October 5th, 2016

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Patricia Burns

Attachments:

Letter to Application Processing Department

JCHE Project Information Sheet

September 14, 2016

Amy Schectman
Executive Director
Jewish Community Housing for Elders

Attention Application Processing Dept.

I have previously attended a few of the planning meetings for the Senior Housing being built at 384 Harvard St. Brookline, Congregation Kehillath Israel. I had at one of those meetings inquired if one or two of these apartments could be set aside for elderly Veterans in need of housing. I was told at the meeting that no priority can be made for elderly veterans as the applications needed to be fair and equal to all.

I am now requesting that when the application process begins that applications forms be sent to Bill McGroarty at Brookline Veterans Offices, 11 Pierce St. Brookline, MA 02445 (617-730-2112). Assuring that any veteran in need of housing will be included in the application pool.

I do appreciate your efforts so that the application process will be done in a fair and equal way.

Sincerely,



Dotty Bell

CC: Bill McGroarty
Brookline Veterans

**JEWISH COMMUNITY HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY
PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET
384 HARVARD STREET, BROOKLINE
May 2016**

UNIT MIX:

| <u>Unit Size</u> | <u># of units</u> |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 0-bedroom | 0 |
| 1-bedroom | 58 |
| 2-bedroom | 4 |
| Total units | 62 |

INCOME MIX:

100% affordable, with a range of affordability levels – approx. 8 units set-aside for households at 30% of Area Median Income (assuming project-based vouchers from the Brookline Housing Authority); approx. 42 units for households up to 60% AMI; approx. 8 units for households between 60% and 120% AMI; approx. 4 units for moderate income households with no income screening.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

JCHE and Congregation Kehillath Israel have reached agreement for JCHE to redevelop a 17,000 sf parcel, the Epstein Auditorium site, available after the completion of KI's 2016-18 renovation. JCHE will develop a 6-storey new construction building, comprising 62 units of affordable rental housing for seniors. The ground floor residential program and amenity space will connect to outdoor areas, the Synagogue and a community-oriented retail space on Harvard Street that will be available to the public.

PROJECT SCHEDULE:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Site Control | April 2016 |
| Zoning/Permitting (40B) | Spring 2016 – Spring 2017 |
| Assemble Funding | Spring 2017 – Fall 2018 |
| Construction Start | Spring 2019 |
| Construction Complete | Spring 2021 |

PROJECT TEAM:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Developer/Sponsor | JCHE |
| Real Estate Attorney | Nixon Peabody |
| Permitting Consultant | Robert Allen |
| Architect | Prelwitz Chilinski Associates (PCA) |
| Civil/Landscape | Stantec |
| General Contractor | TBD |
| Project Lender | TBD |
| LHTC Investor | TBD |