

BROOKLINE COUNCIL ON AGING
Minutes of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting
Wednesday, October 10, 2012

The Brookline Council on Aging (COA) meeting was held at the Brookline Senior Center on Wednesday, October 10, 2012, at 1:00 pm. Present were:

- Board members: Peter Ames, Doris Toby Axelrod, Judith Chernoff, Nancy Daly, Ruthann Dobek, Irving B. Finn, Phil Fullerton, Harry Johnson, Jean Kramer, Helen Lew, John Mulhane, Claire Lurie, Yolanda Rodriguez, Agnes Rogers, Miriam Sargon, and William Wong
- Staff: Judith Gimple and Sue Welpton
- Others: Deborah Brooks, David Brown, Gloria Burkin, Jean Doherty, Leslie Gordon, Nancy Johnson, Ken Kraft, Elaine Langenthal, Sherry Lee, Helen Liu, Sara Rossi, Barbara Scotto, Lucille Tawa, Leah Wood, Meira Zadek, and Lula Zelikman

COA chairman Agnes Rogers called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm and asked for acceptance of the May meeting minutes. Acceptance of the minutes was moved and seconded.

Ruthann Dobek announced that Evelyn Roll and Judith Chasen had called to say that they were unable to come to the meeting.

Agnes then introduced this month's speakers—Psychologist Kenneth Kraft and Psychiatrist David Brown who, along with Psychiatrist Christopher Gates, would like to do a study of successful retirement with the help of the Brookline Senior Center community.

Drs Kraft, Brown, and Gates would like to try to find an answer to the question: What contributes to a successful retirement? Dr. Kraft, acting as spokesperson for the group said:

The airwaves are saturated with ads about retirement planning. But what are they about? Money: how to save it and how to invest it. Of course, finances are important for retirement, but what are the other parts that complete the puzzle of getting your needs met? The domains usually cited are:

Health Nutrition and fitness, rest, medical problems, doctors

Relationships Starting, building, repairing— with children, grandchildren, other relatives, friends, members of the community

Play and fun What makes you laugh, provides joy?

Relaxation How to slow down your physiology, quiet your thoughts, feel greater peace

Creativity What can you do that is new, uniquely yours?

Purpose What gives your life meaning and a sense of direction?

Service What can you give to others?

Self How to grow and develop to feel a sense of value and worth. How to be resilient and keep a positive attitude.

Spirituality Identifying with the universal and transcendent

Part of a successful retirement would be dealing with the challenges that older age brings, coping with **loss** (of loved ones, occupation, vigor) and **loneliness** (caused by death, moving away, loss of mobility and health—all of old friends and health problems—physical and mental.

The doctors would like to explore how relevant the above categories are, how they need to be better understood, and what else needs to be considered to get a clearer sense of what contributes to a successful retirement. They would like to ask us many questions, among them:

What do we consider a successful retirement?

When we get up in the morning, do we look forward to all the things we are going to do?

At bedtime, how do you feel about your day?

How are your relationships with your spouse, kids, grandkids?

How has your marriage changed since your retirement?

How has loss of significant persons in your life affected you?

How well did the preparation for this part of your life work out?

What kind of preparation could you have done that you didn't do?

What things didn't you anticipate?

What would you do differently?

What were your hopes about how it would go?

What was the reality?

What got in the way of those hopes?

If you could wave a magic wand, what else would you like?

What has pleased you most?

What have the surprises been?

What is the best part?

What have you enjoyed most?

What was the most difficult, most unexpected adjustment you had to make?
Has anybody been helpful to you in managing your retirement?
Who has helped the most?
What keeps you up at night?
Are there resources that would be helpful now?
Did you want to retire when you did?
Why did you retire?
Any regrets?

These questions have been designed to help get to the core understanding how to help people who are planning to retire or who are already retired. We will use this information to design tools for this segment of society.

What's in it for us (the Brookline Senior Center community)? The doctors will provide the community with an analysis of the answers they get to the interviews that will provide:

- A self-reflection exercise to help better understand individual of the interviewees at this time of life.
- Some ideas for the Senior Center about how gratification and fulfillment of senior community individuals can be enhanced at this time when many are free of the responsibilities of earlier years and there is space to find new meaning and provide continuing satisfaction with their lives.
- Some insights into how to cope with difficulties and simultaneously find sources of happiness.

There are sign-up sheets for those interested in participating in this study. Individual interviews will be no longer than one hour and will be conducted at the Senior Center if space is available.

A lively discussion and many questions followed. The board was primarily interested in the qualifications of the researchers, their affiliation (which was the Harvard Medical School but the study is an independent one), and whether the group had obtained authorization to do this study and if so from whom.

Ruthann suggested that the doctors seek approval of the study by the Commonwealth Office of Elder Affairs committee that has been set up to review and approve such studies.

Agnes thanked Ken and David for their presentation. She then called for committee reports.

Springwell Report (Helen Lew reporting)

Helen reported that she had attended the first meeting of Springwell at their new Waltham headquarters (at 307 Waverley Oaks Road). The offices are spacious and much better suited to the organization than the old ones in Watertown. But it is a “schlep” to get to the new Springwell office from Brookline.

Springwell is still looking for a new executive director.

Ruthann reminded everyone that we need a representative to represent the Brookline COA at Springwell. Meetings are monthly on Thursdays. Anyone interested in being a Springwell liaison should contact Ruthann.

Liaison with the Selectmen (Nancy Daly reporting)

Nancy reported that the Selectmen are working with the Livable Communities Committee of BrooklineCAN to get Brookline designated as a World Health Organization Age-Friendly City. Frank Caro has provided a draft of the document entitled “Age-Friendly Brookline: An Assessment of Brookline’s Age-Friendly Features and Plans to Pursue Additional Age-Friendly Features.” Copies of the document were passed out at the meeting. He, the Council on Aging, and the Board of Selectmen would appreciate comments on the draft report. Copies of the draft report were passed out at the meeting.

Nancy also reported on the work BrooklineCAN is doing on bicycles.

These will be among the subjects on the agenda at the meeting of the BrooklineCAN Livable Communities on Monday, October 29, at 3:00 pm at the Senior Center.

And last, but certainly not least, Nancy mentioned two warrant articles that are of particular interest for the next Town Meeting:

- Banning regular plastic bags—to be replaced by paper and compostable plastic
 - Banning the use of polystyrene
- for health and recycling reasons according to the proponents of these article

At the end of the report, Nancy was given a round of applause for her efforts for Brookline’s seniors.

Directors Report (Ruthann Dobek reporting)

Stick around after this meeting for the SHINE update on Medicare 2013 at 2:30 pm. Copies of the draft document (Frank Caro’s as described above) were passed out.

Don't miss:

- IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CREATE! on Thursday, October 18 at the main branch of Brookline Public Library from 6:30 to 8:30 am
- The 11th ANNUAL AUTUMN BENEFIT, honoring Barney Frank, on Wednesday, October 24, at 6:00 pm
- The FOLLEN ANGELS CONCERT, IN MEMORY OF CIPPY MACDOUGALL, on Monday, October 22, at 1:00 pm
- We have heard that the new ELDERBUS will be in Boston this week! Keep your fingers crossed, and look for it to arrive ready for use by the Senior community by the November COA meeting.
- Wish Agnes's birthday on October 15
- And Judith started her 6th year as editor of the Senior News and Events with the October issue
- VOTE on November 6!
- The New Repertory Theatre will present "To Kill a Mockingbird" on Sunday, November 4, AT THE SENIOR CENTER
- The Reagle Theater performance of "THE RAT PACK" on Sunday, November 11, in Waltham
- And the 28th ANNUAL HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR on Friday, November 9, and Saturday, November 10 at the Senior Center

There being no additional new or old business, Agnes Rogers called for a motion to adjourn. This was moved, seconded, and the meeting ended at 2:10 pm.

The next COA meeting will be on Wednesday, November 14, at the Senior Center at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Gimple