

SENIOR CENTER EXPANSION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Submitted by Lori Krinsky

FINAL Minutes for the meeting of July 14, 2008
7:10 a.m. in the Faulkner Room, Town Hall

Attending

Committee Members Present: Steve Baran, Ann Chang, Jean Fleming, Mike Gowing, Herman Kabakoff, Paulina Knibbe, Lori Krinsky, Steve Ledoux, Gena Manalan, Barbara Tallone.

Steering Committee Members Absent: Peter Ashton, Dore' Hunter, Heather Harer

Administrative

The minutes of the previous meetings were accepted without adjustment.

Schedule

Dates were selected for upcoming steering committee meetings. We will change from the usual Wednesday to Tuesday for August 19th. Future meeting dates appear at the end of this document.

Knibbe suggested, and the committee agreed, to work toward a public forum in January. The group will then present an outline of all three options: expansion, lease, build. Feedback from that meeting will help determine what option to focus on for April Town Meeting. We may request feasibility funds at Town Meeting.

We may still have a focus group meeting in October with the individuals who volunteered on our Town Meeting survey to be part of such a gathering. Krinsky noted that one of the focus group teams that participated in the town's second Visioning session opted to prioritize a community center as the top goal for the town.

Expansion Option

Gowing shared a preliminary layout for a 2500 sq. ft. addition to the current center. His suggestions focus on slab based extensions along the center lines of the building. He will work with an architect, Ann Sussman, to explore additional expansion options and with Bruce Stamski on parking configurations. Gowing has also procured a geographic contour map of the current facility and grounds.

Chang reminded the group that the additional parking space in the front of the building proposed on Gowing's plan uses land that is currently owned by Audubon Hill residents, not the town. She wanted the group to recall that the residents seemed willing to trade that parcel for a promise of additional drainage work to be done on the access road to the property.

Knibbe noted that additional parking in the back does not aid in the desire to have one entrance to the building. Fleming expressed concern that it would be difficult to turn around in the back parking lot.

Function Task Force

Manalan offered a report from the Function Task Force that defines priorities and spaces for the leasing option. The total square footage delineated in the report is 13,220. This includes only active space, not room for hallways, bathrooms, ADA requirements, etc. External space considerations include: parking for 80-100 cars, covered drop off area, green outside area, separate entrance for kitchen service.

Report highlights: The largest internal space would be a non-carpeted 3000 sq. ft. room with 2 movable soundproof partitions. This room would accommodate gatherings from 50-150 people, which would include lunches, larger classes, dances. A second multifunctional space would be 1500 sq. ft. with carpeting and one partition. The fitness space would be 1600 sq. ft. to hold classes of 30-35 people. A thousand square feet would be set aside for reception and another of the same size for billiards and table tennis. Other functions that were assigned specific sq. ft. designations include: computer room, 6 office spaces for staff, staff bathroom, kitchen, 4 private consultation spaces, durable medical equipment storage, cardio exercise room and locker space, repair shop, and a quiet room.

Leasing Option

Kabakoff and Tallone secured a broker to help locate space in Acton as potential lease space. The broker is Stan Burwick. They set a parameter of 10,000-20,000 sq. ft. Burwick offered five sites. Two locations in Nagog Park said they did not want to lease to a senior center. A third location near Post Office Square does not offer adequate parking. A location on route 27 near High St., where the Beacon newspaper offices used to be, was a promising spot. It is one story with 20,000 sq. ft, and it has ample parking. The Discovery Way building off Piper Rd. near Rt. 2 also has potential. Discovery Way has up to 40,000 sq. ft. available, loads of parking, and the owner appears very willing to make changes to the building to accommodate a senior center.

Kabakoff and Tallone were careful not to act on behalf of the town and will defer to LeDoux to follow up with Burwick and remind him that the town is just in the preliminary stage of looking into the leasing idea.

Build Option

Ashton will chair this committee. Volunteers are being designated.

Community Center Concept

Knibbe noted that she is receiving more feedback favoring a community center concept. She likened it to the school model where the schools use the buildings during the day and open them to the community at night.

Action Items:

Knibbe, Krinsky, and Fleming will determine if an October focus group meeting is desirable.

Krinsky will contact spokesperson from the Vision Session group.

Gowing will follow up with Sussman and Stamski.

LeDoux to stay in contact with Burwick.

Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday August 19th at 7:10 am in Faulkner Room in Town Hall

Wednesdays at 7:10 am in Faulkner Room in Town Hall:

Sept. 17, Oct. 15, Nov. 19, Dec. 17, Jan. 21, Feb. 18, Mar. 18, Apr. 15