

From: Margaret Woolley Busse [mailto:bussehome@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 01, 2011 5:46 PM
To: Acton 2020 Committee
Subject: FW: Acton Forum Extra! December 1, 2011

FYI. I suppose Paulina can fill us in on the details of the meeting when we meet next.

From: Acton Forum [mailto:Allen@TheHomesteader.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 01, 2011 11:24 AM
To: bussehome@comcast.net
Subject: Acton Forum Extra! December 1, 2011



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Attached files:

Senior Center Building Committee seeks change to mandate

By Allen Nitschelm
Thursday, December 1, 2011

The Senior Center Building Committee (SCBC) is seeking to expand its mandate to encompass building a community center as well. At their 12/1/11 meeting, they also decided to seek \$200,000 at this April's Town Meeting to begin the design work needed for a new building.

The issue of whether to build just a senior center or whether to include community use has been debated several times at these meetings. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) had asked the group to implement the plan that was worked out a few years ago, which mentioned possible community use but was not very specific. Now, some SCBC members are pushing to include community use for the building, while others want it dedicated to the seniors, or at least to give them first priority for usage.

Finance Committee member Paulina Knibbe, who is on the SCBC and was the group's Chair when the original report was written, reported that the Finance Committee had voted to reduce available Free Cash in next year's budget due to the economy and some unfunded liabilities that the town and schools face. The plan had been to use \$2 million of Free Cash next year but the FinCom will be recommending that be reduced to \$1 million instead. The FinCom is also proposing setting aside money for the unfunded liabilities. The recommended level is an additional \$5 million per year, although the town is not obligated to fund it at that level. This would mean there may be less interest among Town Meeting members in starting new projects, Knibbe said.

The SCBC will ask for further direction from the BOS at its January 9, 2012 meeting. It seemed to favor having more members appointed to a subcommittee which would get more information about the community center aspect of the plan and begin to develop support for it among the general public. Knibbe said that the 20/20 meeting indicated broad support for the concept of a community center but that support was shallow, in that participants did not want to spend money to fund it.

Sharon Mercurio, the COA's director, handed out a draft survey that will be distributed to seniors over the next couple of months to understand usage and get feedback on what times seniors would visit, what classes they are interested in, and how often they attend. Member Ann Chang said many seniors didn't attend because they were simply too busy doing other things. **Acton Forum** has repeatedly questioned the need for a new center based on current usage. Usage for a "community center" has not been studied.

The next SCBC meeting will be held Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 7:30 am in Town Hall, room 126.

CALENDAR

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