

January 27, 2016 Meeting of the Facilities Implementation & Strategic Planning Committee

Members present: John Hadley Kevin McCormick
 Christopher Rucho Janice Ash
 Patrick Crowley James Dugan
 Marcia Cairns Phil Mallet

Members absent: John DiPietro
 Siobhan Bohanson
 Ray Bricault

Mr. Hadley convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Approve minutes of December 1, 2015

Motion Mr. McCormick to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Rucho, all others in favor with the exception of Ms. Cairns who was not in attendance.

Report of Council on Aging

John Curran, member of the Council, recapped progress to date. We had a major bump in the road when the Bethlehem Bible Church (BBC) was voted down. They have the same goal which is to develop a viable senior center at a reasonable price. They began working on new proposals with a group of people who came forward after town meeting. Bob Chisholm led the group and they put together a list of 16 properties. They looked for a site to have an 8,500 square foot building with 80 parking spots and an outside area. They visited each property, gathered data, and the list went to 4, which were presented to the Council on Aging. The Council looked at all four and on January 11th the considered each property and concluded that one property should be presented to FISP. It was unanimously proposed.

Mr. Chisholm reports that of the people in the group, half supported the BBC and half did not. They took a survey of 300 people that mandated it should be located on town-owned property. Of the four properties looked at, the former Shell Property, was not town owned. Their charge was to compare the properties and evaluate them against one another. They were the former Woodland School, Mixer Building, and Goodale Park up at the former pine grove. They feel the building should be built at 120 Prescott Street, the former Mixer property, and the full Council on Aging agrees.

Jim Ryan served on Bob Chisholm's committee. He feels at this point they cannot go much further within getting professional services to do some preliminary design work. He would like to get FISP's buy in to get an article on the warrant for town meeting to fund preliminary design work. Mr. Hadley noted that one of the issues mentioned about the BBC was location and he questioned why this location would be more convenient. Mr. Chisholm states distances was not a primary consideration, it was ease of access. Mixer is 1.8 miles from the center of town and the Shrewsbury Street property they looked at is 1.8 as well as the current location of the senior center.

Mr. Dugan asked if the money they are requesting is for conceptual drawings. Mr. Ryan would like funds for preliminary design so the Council on Aging could pick one and move on. Mr. McCormick noted that in the past we have had good luck with purchasing a building and remodeling it. He asked what they were asking for the Shell building and noted that when we were looking for a town hall we found it was cheaper to purchase a building and renovate it. Mr. Chisholm advised that on the survey, by a wide majority, the preference was to build a new building. He spoke with the owner of the Shell property, it is 7,010 sq. ft. and if you square off the back end it would be around 8,400 sq. ft. He would rehab it at a cost of \$700,000 to \$800,000. He asked what he might think in terms of a price and the owner thought \$1.4 million and add the cost of the improvements for a total of \$2.1 or \$2.2 million.

If you add prevailing wage it is another 15%. Mr. Crowley remembers all the survey asked was would you be in favor of building a new building as a senior center. The question was not would you rather it be new or an existing building. There was no alternative. Lisa Clark Vicklund, Council on Aging Director, noted that there was another part of the survey, and if you were not in favor, you could provide a comment. Mr. Crowley feels that the question cannot be considered a mandate. He feels we have to be honest and say there is no mandate from that question. Ms. Ash thinks the reason why we went that route was because no one responded when the initial RFP went out for space. Pat Boucher sat at the table asking people to sign the paper and she told people that we wanted to know what they thought of either getting a new senior center on town owned property or if you know of another property you could sign either one. Mr. Rucho understands that it was a petition. Audrey Cleary, Council on Aging member, understands that it was a very informal piece of paper. Mr. Ryan thinks a survey is anecdotal and they didn't talk about it when they looked at properties. Their charge was to try to identify properties for potential sites and pick the best property. He thinks on the whole Mixer is probably the best place. Mr. Rucho attended the meeting when the sites were looked at and some were not for sale. Mr. Chisholm added that they never considered the questionnaire a mandate. Mr. Crowley heard tonight that the survey gives us a mandate to build and not to buy.

Mr. Rucho asked if the Orchard Knoll property was looked at. Mr. Chisholm advised that they heard there was a program started for that property. Ms. Cairns added that at the time we talked about that program we talked about new senior housing and a separate senior center at that location and she was told it was off the table. She feels it is the perfect place. The Housing Authority gave the land to the town to build more senior housing. Mr. Hadley is on the Affordable Housing Task Force and reports that we did get the property deeded to the town, we will be trying to get a developer to develop senior housing, and as part of the package they would build a senior center. That is something the Affordable Housing Task Force is working on. Mr. Curran thought that the property needed a lot of site work needed, voiced concern about access from Route 140, and thought it was going to take a long time to make this viable. He liked the Pine Grove site, near the school and there could be intergenerational programs. Ms. Ash states that they picked Mixer because the land is clear, the gas line was just installed and sewer is there. It would be less work. Mr. Rucho asked if regionalization was looked at. Mr. Chisholm stated not by the ad hoc committee. Ms. Vicklund talked to Sterling and they do not want that headache. She spoke with Karen Phillips, the Director. With regard to a center on the Maple Street property, Mr. Hadley explained that someone would built it and lease it back to the town, it could be a 99-year lease and they could get tax credits to build. He estimates it at two or three years before someone could start construction. Ms. Ash is on the Housing Authority and she would not like to see the senior center there as security would be her big issue. Mr. Ryan would like to proceed with the Mixer site and get moving on this. Mr. Curran thinks there is support for that step, and an article for the May town meeting to fund a conceptual design of the senior center would get a rational cost estimate. Mr. Rucho added that if we are going to do that we would have to call an architect for an estimate.

Mr. McCormick asked if the Town of Sterling would consider regionalizing, is that something our Council on Aging is open to or not. Lisa Clark Vicklund stated that she would say no because of what people have said about travel distance. Ms. Ash advise that as a council we have never really talked about it. Mr. McCormick advised that he had a meeting with an official from the Town of Sterling and they said they would be interested. Mr. Chisholm noted that the Sterling senior center is 6,000 square feet and if our needs at 8,500 square feet that would not be a route they would consider. Mr. McCormick noted that when he met with Sterling they said the facility was too big and they would like more people to fill it. Ms. Vicklund spoke with Karen the Director of the COA who said the building is already too small for all the things she is planning to do and she is not interested nor is her board interested in regionalizing.

Ms. Clary commented that a couple of years ago the senior center was going to be the first priority for the Town of West Boylston to build. She hopes FISP will consider it a first priority before we engage in any other town building. Mr. Rucho stated that in defense of the committee, we did bring a building forward and it didn't pass.

Mr. Curran thinks it make sense to do an engineering study and get it before town meeting.

Motion Mr. Rucho to move forward with a Request for Proposals for an engineering study and prepare conceptual drawings with a cost estimate to build a senior center and present it to the Board of Selectmen, seconded by Mr. Crowley, all in favor.

Discuss next steps for police station project

Mr. Hadley asked everyone to go over the 7 proposals, rank them, and the committee will interview the top three. Mr. Dugan will call some of the communities the firms have done work in. It was agreed to meet next on February 10. We will contact Paul Lieneck to find out how their fee is based; is it a percentage of the project, or a set number.

Motion Mr. Crowley to adjourn at 8:10 p.m., seconded by Mr. Dugan, all in favor.

Approved: February 10, 2016