

## **COA Info and History of Facility Search**

**May 11, 2015**

### **What is Productive Aging?**

Senior Centers support Productive Aging. A substantial and growing body of research shows that keeping seniors connected through physical activity, social, recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities promotes “Productive Aging”. Productive Aging essentially means keeping seniors engaged and interested in their own lives. It serves *three main purposes*: 1) **The senior can care for her or himself**, which provides a sense of personal dignity and also saves money on home care and/or nursing home care; 2) **The senior can provide care for others** (relatives young and old, friends, neighbors); 3) **The senior can volunteer**, a huge resource of time and talent with financial value to the entire community, as well as keeping the volunteers socially connected.

The Town of Greenfield’s Council on Aging (GCOA) has provided elder services to the community at the Weldon House since 1982. Social / recreational programs, support groups, health education, physical activity, cultural programs, Medicare counseling, assistance with benefits applications and other social service help, elder law assistance, consults with the professional staff on aging related issues such as caregiving, transportation, housing. The Senior Center serves about 1,500 elders per year with over 17,000 units of service with four FT staff and about 70 volunteers.

The 2010 U.S. Census shows Greenfield with a 60+ population of 4,070. In the age 65+ group in Greenfield there are 906 householders who live alone, and 1,082 age 65+ with a disability.

### **Greenfield COA Awards:**

2001 ROSE Award by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs for “Media/Community Outreach

2002 National Council on Aging “Health Promotion Institute Best Practice Award” for Greenfield COA Wellness Program

2009 Special Citation from Senator Rosenberg for GCOA’s Volunteer Program.

2015 Special Citation from Senator Rosenberg for Senior Center Volunteer Program.

## Facility History - Timeline points of interest

- 1979 Senior Center was at Fiske Ave. Weldon House was in planning stages. Recorder article: sufficient parking was a concern for Weldon location from the outset. 88 spaces total for apartments and “activity center”.
- 1980 Recorder article: survey showed what seniors liked best was the ability to be able to drop in and visit. Seniors using the center tended to be those living alone.
- 1980: Recorder letter to the editor, Bob Wolanske: Question should the Town pay rent after paying \$300,000 (from CDBG) for renno at Weldon. Other sites besides Weldon should be looked at. Weldon created “shell”, Town provided everything else -- kitchen, restrooms, HVAC, electric, plumbing, furnishings.
- 1982: Senior Center opens at Weldon House, 54 High Street suite 2. Ten year lease.
- 1992: Another ten year lease. Rent negotiated from \$12,000/year to \$6,000/year by COA Director Sarah McColgan, COA Executive Director.
- 1998-1999: Indoor Air Quality Assessment at the request of COA Director Ann Langford, by Michael Feeney, Chief, Emergency Response/Indoor Air Quality. **Symptoms reported by senior center staff and meal site staff (red, itching eyes, swelling of eyelids), headaches, respiratory complaints, are still in existence to date – different staff.** Problems with ventilation identified among other problems, all rooms over recommended CO2 levels. Mold remediation done. Other “easy fixes” were done. Some of the recommendations were costly, never completed, such as: add fresh air intakes, bathroom ventilation, discontinue use of catch basins for AC condensate.
- 1999-2000: Looking toward the 2002 Weldon House lease expiration, COA did a study of 23 sites with Margo Jones Architects. Top 8 ranked: 1) GTD Building #33 – only if combined other compatible services; 2) Wells St lot; 3) **Davis St School**; 4) Sears building; 5) Improvements to Weldon; 6) Garden Theater; 7) First National Bank; 8) Webb building.
- 2001: Certified Mail sent by Greenfield Health Dept. to Weldon Associates, Notice of health violation MGL CH 111 s122. Order of corrective action within 15 days. During same time period Weldon told to cease and desist spray painting water-stained ceiling tiles.
- 2001: 11/14/01 presentation by COA to TC re: new Senior Center facility. Challenges of current space: limits on scope of services due to parking availability, room size, max occupancy, access barriers, acoustics, lighting, overall habitability, air quality, high CO2 levels/ no fresh air intake, history of mold, ongoing moisture issues due to overhead pipes infrastructure (A/C condensate worsening each year), overflow leaks from apartments, overflow catch-basin pans above ceiling.
- 2003: Air quality memo from COA Director Bob Stowe. Inspection by Health Dept.
- 2006: Davis St School feasibility study. Kuhn-Riddle Architects -- drawings and other info available.
- 2004: \$100,000 bond authorization for land for new Senior Center.
- 2009: New facility again at the forefront of discussion. Explored possibility to co-locate Youth Center with Senior Center at 20 Sanderson St.
- 2012: Discussion with COA Director Hope Macary and Health Dept. regarding water-damaged ceiling tiles.
- 2014: Contingent of COA members meet with Mayor Martin to revisit new facility needs as well as budget challenges. Mayor states his intention of making a new facility a priority with a completion goal of 2016.