

## **Greenfield Senior Center Building Committee Meeting**

24 March 2016 – 6pm – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Meeting Room Town Hall

Attending: Jerry S. Moore, Chair; Ginger Carson; Larry Jubb; Lane Kelly, Finance Director; Mayor Martin; Hope Macary, COA Director; Dan Pallotta, OPM; Jean Wall.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:59pm.

Minutes of the 8 March 2016 Building Committee meeting were reviewed as distributed; moved, Jean Wall; seconded, Larry Jubb. APPROVED

### Public Comment

The Chair opened the meeting to public comment, which is summarized below:

Ginny Desorgher stated she was in favor of the new Senior Center project going forward; cited statistics on seniors in Greenfield and in Massachusetts obtained through her work with the Planning Board; thought it could be a good idea if there was senior housing above the proposed building if it were economically feasible.

Ed Berlin, Library Board member, stated he supports both the library and senior center projects; felt that it would be important to show that all municipal building projects currently in the planning stages are cooperating together; proposed that a temporary plan to house the senior center in an alternative location due to its current condition and cited the current library would be a great place for the senior center; however, timing of both projects would probably not allow that to be a possibility.

Julia Margolis stated she was not in favor of considering the current library building as a home for the new senior center citing parking and accessibility issues with that building.

Bob Williford stated that an 18<sup>th</sup> century home-turned-library was no more suited to a new senior center than the 1904 hotel building (Weldon) is now. Second floor of library is not accessible.

Pat Jordan stated that considering the library as a home for the senior center presented significant parking issues for seniors inasmuch as it would, under the current library plans, share limited parking with the new library.

Nancy Hazard (sp) observed that the current library and the planned senior center are of similar square footage size and proposed an estimate for refashioning the library into the senior center might be considered.

Dan Pallotta, OPM, responded that, while we could take a look at the library, it was a very different type of building and that the costs and limitations on the rehabilitation of a historic building would probably be prohibitive. The current library is 15,000 square feet, much larger than what the COA is requesting for space. Additionally, he indicated that the timing of the senior center project (2017) and the library project (2020) would not coincide with considering such a move. He also cited that the library project would be heavily dependent upon State grant funding and that funding cycle and that the library would probably need to move forward independently so as not to miss that cycle.

Mary Williford observed that the library is not an energy efficient building and questioned the possibility of making it so.

Dorothy Gagnon stated that the cost of renovating an existing historic building would be much more than building a new one.

Ginny Desorgher cited stats on number of senior disabled, concern for those with mobility challenges, is opposed to locating the Senior Center at the current library location. She stated the Town has a moral obligation to look after its aged residents.

There being no further public input, the public comment section was closed at 6:28pm.

**1. Council Vote**

Lane Kelly reviewed that the Town Council vote on the senior center project and its amended expenditure received 5 votes, needed 9 votes to pass.

**2. Reconsideration-What does that Mean?**

Lane Kelly outlined that the Motion to Reconsider submitted by Councilman Mass meant that the March Town Council vote was suspended and that the object now would be, under the Mayor's direction, to have the Building Committee develop what kind of plan would be submitted to the Town Council at its April meeting. She indicated that the timing is extremely short to turn around the plan; to determine if there was need for a complete redesign and suggested that the revised plan should be coordinated with the Council on Aging to secure a vote there.

Mayor Martin observed that he felt questions about the project reflected three primary areas of concern: (1) cost; (2) purpose; and (3) impact on the taxpayers, and that these three areas should be taken into consideration in preparing a better explanation of the project to Town Council.

He led a discussion of the complicated process of projecting municipal debt outlining that, as existing debt is retired, additional debt is assumed to ensure quality of life and infrastructure projects for the Town. This process focuses on maintaining a "healthy" level of debt at the same time preserving the Town's good credit rating. A discussion of this "blended debt" ensued in explanation of the complexities of municipal budgeting.

Additionally, as to cost, the Mayor observed that the revised plan should concentrate on the building's use: can we do it better, can we do it less expensively, and on portions of the building plan that would address can we phase in later? He stated that although schools and libraries enjoy substantial financial support from other entities, the Town is on its own to fund resources for our seniors and we have an obligation to care for these residents.

As to the purpose of the building, he reiterated that the project has always been viewed by both him and the Building Committee as having a community use component. He said that, in his investigation, he's found the Veterans' organization isn't interested in relocating or sharing the building, and has identified no other appropriate alternatives at this time. He will continue discussions for possible co-location ideas.

**3. Next Steps**

The Committee decided that Dan Pallotta, OPM would coordinate a meeting as quickly as possible with the Mayor, the OPM, the Finance Officer, the COA Director, and the Building Committee Chair to develop a plan revision for presentation to the Building Committee on Thursday, 31 March 2016 at 6pm. He would also coordinate the schedule of ensuring that the process move forward through all appropriate Town committees. Committee members approved the process as outlined.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58pm.