

Master Plan Implementation Committee

Minutes of March 22, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Ed Forsberg, Chairman, at 6:10 pm in Room 112, Town Hall.

Committee Members Present: Ed Forsberg, Dick Power, Al Goetz, Dick Nottebart, Roger Turner, Mary Kent, Bruce Norwell, John Desmond

Visitors Present: Barbara Coghlan, Council on Aging Director

Staff Present: Don Johnson, Stephanie Mercandetti, Maura Therrien

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct interviews with Town department heads regarding their departments' needs for new or renovated space for their ongoing facilities needs. Barbara Coghlan, Council on Aging Director, was present for this purpose. She passed out information on the services that the Council on Aging as well as other regional and state agencies in working with the Council on Aging provide for Walpole's senior population, i.e., those over 60 years of age.

Barbara said she is the Council on Aging's only full time employee, and there is one part-time outreach worker. Space is the most critical concern; the Senior Center area of Town Hall consists of 3,900 square feet including the kitchen; office space is nil, there is no privacy for the doctors, nurses, and lawyers, social worker, and outreach worker who help with fuel assistance, food stamps, help with tax returns, to attend to the needs of 5,133 people over sixty with a wide range of programs. We see sixty per cent of those folks. In ten years projections say there will be 15,000 more people over sixty. The Friends of the Council on Aging have been fundraising for us for ten years. A larger facility will allow us to offer more programs. We have a secretary in common. They underwrite our programs. Our newsletter is paid for by ads but \$13,000 is aligned with 501C3 funded mailing permit.

Ed asked, is 3,900 square feet sufficient? Barbara responded, we need more space. A freestanding building is a goal of the Council on Aging. This was the Council's decision.

Ed said, eight years ago [Architect] Kevin Uniack did an estimate. Compare our numbers to Franklin and Foxboro. Franklin has 18,000 square feet in the town campus with the town hall.

Barbara said, now our limit is one hundred people per event. We cap the number of people attending. Sunday we had ninety-eight. Roger said, the figures alone do not allow for elderly who have no support from family, who may be forgotten.

Barbara said information from the Executive Office on Elder Affairs and the Massachusetts Council on Aging states that isolated elders are in the greatest need of support. Mrs. Geyer sees these. HESSCO Elder Services have protective specialists who serve elders at risk in twelve towns. Dick N. agreed that the council serves well, the sixty-two per cent of our population. Barbara said, some of the activities are home visits, referrals to HESSCO, and outreach to find exploited or abused seniors

Al said, you need private conference rooms - how many, and how big a space? How about space for storage of equipment? Number of senior bus and van parking spaces? How many parking spaces for those who drive to the Senior Center? The Friends of the Council on Aging has plans to build near Blackburn Hall. Don said, in speaking with Barbara earlier she indicated the Council needs private consulting rooms, a flexible common space, and several activity rooms. Barbara said when we have large gatherings we utilize several areas in town hall (i.e., Room 112 and the Main Meeting Room. Rental space would not work for us. The plan will not be piecemeal. Al said, elevators make more floors available and allow for a smaller building footprint. Mary said the new library has a one hundred foot media room and the Council on Aging is welcome to schedule use of the space.

John said we have the time to plan our facilities. Don said we could check what works for other similar towns. John said schools are standardized to save money. The new Norwood High has a cookie cutter design. At Tri-County Vocational school senior citizens are invited to have meals twice a month. Ed asked Don and Stephanie to speak with Franklin town officials to find out about their Senior Center. We are interested in the size of their building, number of people served, acres used.

Mary then gave a brief report on the public forum on the Walpole Woodworkers site held on Friday, 3/18 at 11:00 AM in the Senior Center, which she had attended on behalf of the MPIC. There were 50+ people in attendance. Price per tax increase and traffic issues were brought up. Retirement of debt during the funding period, if purchased, including Adams Farm in 2016, was brought out. The issues are emotional. About a half hour was all business and about a half hour was about personal experience. Some people jumped to conclusions and some listened. The opposition appreciated our position. They are willing to seek information. The purchase of the Woodworkers' property will cost the average household about \$44.00 the first year, in a tax increase, and would drop in cost every year.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,