

Options and Recommendations for the Re-use of the Gates School, Senior Center, and Town Hall Complex

Presentation to the Board of Selectman

June 21, 2016

Scituate Adaptive Building Re-use Committee

Charge

“The Scituate Adaptive Re-use of Buildings Committee will undertake a comprehensive analysis of potential re-uses for Gates Middle School, the Police Station, the Fire Station No. 3, Town Hall and the Senior Center. The analysis should include future uses by the municipality as well as the potential benefits of disposing of any of these properties. The Committee will provide a comprehensive recommendation to the BOS for their consideration.”

Key Questions/Issues

- Should we keep the Gates Property, the town hall complex, and the Brook Street COA for future municipal use?
- What are they worth if we sell them?
- What is the future property tax base if we sell them and what are the additional demands on town services?
- What zoning issues will need to be addressed when considering alternate uses?
- Is there intrinsic value to the town in these properties?
- Is there a historic designation to the Gates school that would impede modifications or demolition?

Work done to date

- **Hired Durkee/Brown and Catlin/Petrovick to complete a needs assessment and develop a conceptual plan for use of Gates property**
- **Worked with commercial real estate brokers to determine approximate values of properties**
- **Held 17 public meetings since August 2015 plus a community forum in January 2016**
- **Examined nine options including renovations, razing, rebuilding and/or selling the properties and concluded with two final options**

Durkee-Brown Study

- **Quantify program needs for all constituent groups including town administration, school administration, Council on Aging, and recreation**
- **Evaluate the importance of adjacencies between groups/departments**
- **Develop conceptual plan to re-use the Gates property that will meet all programming needs.**

Obvious stuff

- **Relocate the Council on Aging from the Brook Street property and sell the Brook Street property** - The building in its current condition is not suitable for other municipal uses. It is not in a location that is ideal for other municipal uses. (Probable value: \$250k)
- **Once the Public Safety Complex is complete, raze the vacant police and fire stations** - Mitigation is required and neither building is suitable for alternate uses without significant investment
- **Timing of a final decision is critical** as the Gates property will require continued maintenance and repair once unoccupied to prevent further deterioration.

Reasons not to sell Gates or Town Hall properties

- **Location: Both are ideal, central locations that have long been used for town purposes**
- **Concentrating public buildings in fewer locations will be more economical to operate and more efficient for use**
- **The Gates property also includes Cudworth House and The Little Red School House - historically valuable buildings**
- **Some of the town hall complex land may be critical to addressing better traffic management at the 3A intersection**
- **Development of the land would add stress to town sewer, water, social services, municipal services, and school infrastructure**
- **Commercial or dense residential development would require spot zoning changes by Town Meeting**

Reasons to Sell Properties

- Provide source of funding for capital projects
- Increase the property tax base

What are the properties worth?

Gates Property (\$3.2 - \$4.0 million)

- High density residential: \$40k/unit x 100 units = \$4.0 million
- Single family housing: 20 clustered lots x \$160k = \$3.2 million
- Annual Property tax revenues: ~\$425k
- Impact on Town Services: Schools, water, sewer, social services, roads

Town Hall Complex (\$2.2 - \$2.5 million)

- Mixed Use Development: Commercial + Residential = \$2.2million
- High density residential: \$40k/unit x 66 units = \$2.5 million
- 6 commercial (not retail) units = \$xxx
- Annual Property Tax revenues: ~\$115k
- Annual Impact on Services: Schools, water, sewer, social services, roads

General Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Do not sell either the Gates property or the Town Hall campus. Both are iconic locations that should remain in the public domain.
2. The Gates School should be renovated for municipal uses or torn down for recreation use
3. A solution for the Senior Center needs to be addressed as a specific project with a near term commitment to move forward.
4. If the Gates School building is to be shuttered for future use, it will require annual expenditures (~\$65k) for heat, security, fire protection, grounds maintenance. It will also likely require capital improvements to avoid deterioration (ie. roof, obsolete infrastructure, etc.)
5. Other properties (future obsolete schools and raw land) should be considered for disposal to help fund capital projects.

Option 1: Gates Property becomes Town Center/ Town Hall complex becomes school property

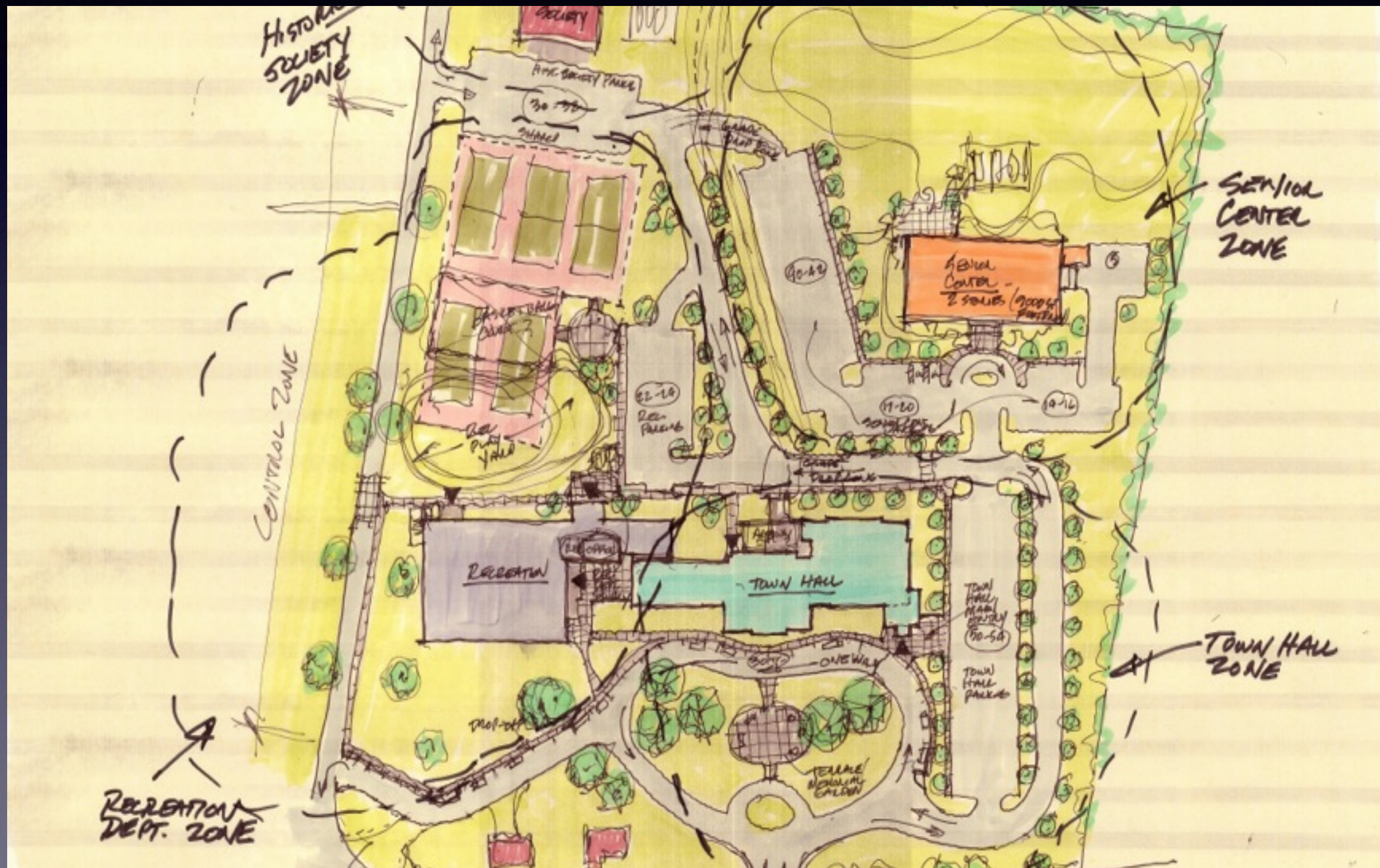
- 1. Council on Aging: New building on the southwest corner of the property. COST: +/- \$8 million**
- 2. Town Hall, School Administration, Recreation Department: Renovate B wing (main building) and gymnasium. Remove A wing and C wing. COST: +/- \$16 - \$22 million (est. \$250- \$350/sf)**
- 3. Town Hall complex used for future recreation/ athletic fields and for traffic management**

Option 1: Gates Property becomes Town Center/ Town Hall complex becomes school property

Pros: Co-locates most municipal activities resulting in efficiency of communications between departments and ease of use for residents; excellent location for COA with ample parking; preserves Gates school; town hall campus ideal for additional recreation given adjacency to schools; meets all programming needs identified; preserves location for town-wide uses; provides space to address traffic patterns at 3A intersection

Cons: Compresses capital spending into a shorter time-frame. Phasing would be challenging: 1) School in need of upgrades (ie. roof) in the near term to avoid deterioration. 2) Senior Center would be in use during delayed renovation of Gates building. 3) All site work and demolition of “C” and “A” wings need to be done to support a new senior center.

Town Center at the Town Green



Option 2: Raze the Gates School and use property for town recreation

1. Build a new COA facility at a TBD location.

COST: +/- \$8 million

2. Renovate or rebuild Town Hall at CJC Campus

COST: +/- \$11 million to build new

3. Relocate School Administration to an existing school building. COST: +/- \$1 million

4. Relocate Recreation Department to an existing school building. COST: +/- \$4 million

5. Raze Gates School and Build new athletic/recreation facilities. COST: TBD

Option 2: Raze the Gates School and use property for town recreation

Pros: Maintains Gates property for public use; Supports a phased approach to capital investments.

Cons: May not efficiently address programming needs of all groups - particularly Town Administration and Recreation; cell tower on CJC Campus may impede uses of property; spreads departments out resulting in inefficiencies for departments and residents.

What we need from you/ Next Steps

The committee recommends (by majority vote) that the preferable course of action is to pursue the redevelopment of the Gates Property as a Town Center campus (Option 1).

If the Board of Selectman is interested in pursuing Option 1:

- 1. A schematic plan for the renovation of Gates School needs to be completed in order to ascertain project costs. (\$tbd)**
- 2. The Senior Center needs to proceed as an independent project to finalize program, location, and schematic design in order to determine final budget. (\$tbd)**
- 3. Estimator needs to provide cost estimates from the schematic plans (\$tbd)**