

MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
October 26, 2017
Center for Performing Arts @ Scituate High School
606 Chief Justice Cushing Highway

Present: Maura C. Curran, Chairman, Anthony V. Vegnani, Vice Chairman, Shawn Harris, John Danehey, Karen Canfield

Al Bangert, Acting Town Administrator

The Meeting was called to order at 6:09 p.m.

Acceptance of Agenda

Mr. Vegnani made a motion to accept the agenda for October 26, 2017

Second by Mr. Danehey, all in favor. Unanimous vote (5-0)

Ms. Curran welcomed everyone tonight to discuss the Senior Center site. The entire Council on Aging board is here this evening.

SCHEDULED ITEMS:

Senior Center Location, John Miller, Council on Aging Chairman

Linda Hayes thanked the council on aging board for their hard work on this project including new and past members. Ms. Hayes introduced the council on aging board. Mr. John Miller, Chairman, Council on aging said the board reviewed the feasibility study and attended all presentations. The board delved into the analysis and in July they decided they would walk the sites. They walked the Driftway site, gates and the Branch street site. No one on the board favored the purple dinosaur. Every site has pros and cons. After walking the sites the board met and discussed at a group what they thought including feedback from the residents. Cost was a consideration as well as what else is going on at each site. The group favored the Kent street/Driftway site. The group is open minded and subsequently the survey was distributed and responded to by residents. The new data and additional feedback from residents is considered and we are ready for a new senior center and want to get to that objective. There are questions from the board and audience such as why don't we use the SHCB, the old medical building on the Driftway, etc. The SHCB is not deeded to be used for one purpose. Gordon Price Vice Chair said in addition to everything Mr. Miller stated no more surveys are necessary and a lot of time was spent on looking at these sites. Mr. Price thanked the board for pursuing this.

Ms. Curran said we had over 565 comments from the survey. 25% of the respondents want to use buildings we already have. 22% said a new senior center is long overdue. 21% do not want to spend money. 6% said they will support if it is a community/multi-purpose facility. 4%

wants to see a master plan. 4% said traffic and parking are a concern. 3% said they prefer a location near town center/library/senior housing. 2% said athletic fields and schools are more important. 2% said a new building is needed. 11% thanked the town for the survey, sell unused buildings and no senior center is needed.

The Purple Dinosaur should be taken off the table.

The Driftway site will require a land swap since it is owned by the Housing Authority. The land they are looking for to swap is the land behind the Central Housing & Library. Mr. Danehey does not see that as a problem. From a cost perspective it is less costly. Cost alone should not be the only consideration. The location is good and accessibility is great but there is no senior housing close by. We could have bus service there and it is close to downtown Scituate. Mr. Danehey said he is looking at this site.

Mr. Vegnani said the Driftway site is isolated He does not like the fact that it is near the wind turbine or Go Green. He does not like this site for those reasons.

Mr. Harris said he does not like the site at all because it is not centrally located. He questions how much acreage there is and if it enough. People drive fast on this road and it is dangerous. Mr. Harris does not feel this is a good option.

Ms. Canfield said her first choice should be in a comprehensive plan and should be at Gates. The uncertainty of that site makes it concerning. Ms. Canfield takes the input of the COA very seriously but honestly there are pros and cons at every site. Ms. Canfield feels the library site will be too congested.

Ms. Curran said the COA brought up some good points. There are some barriers and this land was originally deeded for affordable housing on the Driftway/Kent Street site. While it is lower on cost it is because it is an easy in and out. The Gates site is more desirable in her opinion. The cons outweigh the benefit with the Kent Street/Driftway site. She would prefer something more centrally located in Town.

Gloria Swift, Old Country Way has the brewery in Greenbush and the parking is not good. We are long overdue for a senior center and it doesn't matter where it is. Linda Hayes has done so much for Scituate. Ms. Swift feels the Driftway is the best location with plenty of parking. Mr. Harris asked what is most important to get it built or the location? She said it is a shame we do not. Tom McCusker, First Parish Road said the Driftway was the last choice and he agrees the library is too crowded. He would like to see the Gate property sold and he feels the Driftway is a good location and the cost is lower. Driftway has a lot of room to expand. Dianne Wells, 20171026 bos minutes

117 Gilson Road lives in that immediate area and passes the Driftway location several times a day. She has never had a problem in the area with a smell. That property used for housing would be a problem due to the wind turbine. Research has been done that there will be strong opposition to having housing near the wind turbine. Mr. Gordon Price is concerned that the Council on Aging was charged with four sites. It concerns him that they are now informed that there is a deed restriction on that site is confusing. He asked if the Selectmen know for sure that there is a restriction. The Scituate Housing Authority has said they are willing to swap the land. Mr. Price said he should have known there would be a complication. Mr. Vegnani said it will be an additional cost to the Town because it is not land that we own. Mr. Price said on the issue of central location the site is close to the harbor and conducive to expansion. Any site looked at needs to consider expansion. Gates and Driftway seem to be rising to the top.

Ms. Curran would like to discuss the library site. Mr. Danehey said to address Mr. Price's point; he always told the COA it was owned by the housing authority. The Town Administrator made sure the SHA was fine with swapping the property for the land behind Central Housing. The library has different options. One was to place the Senior Center on the right hand side of the library and he is against that. The second site is up the parking lot in the backside of the lot. The third site is along Central school between the library and the SHA property. Of all three sites the 2nd option looks the best behind the parking lot. There would be a little community area with the library and Central Housing. This is the land that would be part of the swap with the SHA for the Driftway property. This location is more expensive than the Kent Street/Driftway site and parking may be an issue. Mr. Danehey asked the COA if the cost component was taken out would they still have selected the Kent Street/Driftway site. Linda Hayes said it was not the cost that steered the COA away from the library site. There was too much there and parking and crowding was an issue there. Lucille Sorrentino is on the COA board and a resident since 1972. We will not all agree on one spot but we need a stand-alone senior center and we should pick a site that has the least obstacles. The Gates school might be it. If Gates has the least obstacles then we should choose that location. Whatever the Selectmen choose everyone will support it. Mr. Vegnani said we are going to make a decision tonight. Mr. Vegnani said we are going to do the best we can and pick the site that is going to be the best site. It still has to pass town meeting vote. Mr. Vegnani likes a multi-functional spot like the library land. That is what is important to him. He like the property behind the parking lot but it is congested back there. Out of the sites Mr. Harris would choose the library location near senior housing. The site costs done 15 years ago make him nervous regarding the cost. Mr. Harris wants to make sure it is going to pass at Town Meeting so it will be built.

Ms. Canfield does not like the option to be behind the parking lot because it is so busy all the time. From a safety perspective she believes it would be dangerous near the library parking lot.

New construction and additional housing behind Central Housing will be difficult coming in and out.

Ms. Curran was surprised how much would fit in the library area. She thinks it is very tight and parking is a big concern to her. She loves the fact that it is centrally located and a campus like feel. For Ms. Curran there are more cons than pros for the library and she would like to take that off the table.

Dale Balog, 74 Wheeler Park Drive, wants to say that she has worked very hard for a long time. Ms. Curran thanked Ms. Balog for her work on the COA. We have to move and do something positive we can't bat this ball around anymore. We need to make some decisions. She will be happy when there is a place to go to. She has to leave the class in the Senior Center due to the lousy space on Brook Street. We need to move forward. She wants good space for the seniors. Happy Birthday to Dale!

Ms. Curran said there are a lot of opinions out there and it is important as a community. She hopes whatever is decided we can come together as a community to educate the public on the value and need for a new senior center.

Audrey Reidy, 32 Strawberry Lane said her only question is could there be another entrance at the library location.

Sandy Duffy Oak Road feels it should be Branch Street location. She lives in that neighborhood and it is centrally located. She feels the driveway should be built for a reasonable price.

Philip Holthaus, 136 First Parish Road feels if the library location is selected it will become a senior ghetto. Most seniors don't live at senior housing and most have licenses and drive. The location is irrelevant. This is not great for everybody who lives all over town. He prefers the Driftway location. The site is nice and it is in a wooded area with plenty of parking.

Ms. Curran said with the Kent Street location it is in the flood plain district. Gates and Branch Street are not. Joanne Ball likes the library area and plenty of ball games in the field. The Driftway is isolated and not a lot of seniors that walk their dogs in the dog park. It is more than a mile to the harbor. The library area is historically the center of town.

Tom McCusker, First Parish Road said the Driftway as a flood zone was reviewed by the architect and it would not impact this site.

Elaine Gordon Hazel Ave likes the Driftway location and she participates at the Marshfield and Cohasset locations. The location does not need to be located near the fields and there is congestion due to the activities on the field. It will not be easier located at the library and fields. The Driftway site stands alone and has room for expansion. Mr. Danehey said every site has some obstacles and the Selectmen are just putting it out there. The board and the Council on Aging will put their best foot forward and articulate the senior center location. Mr. Vegnani said there will be parking spots for the Senior Center. Kathryn Seaton 26 Doctors Hill asked if there were fewer parking spaces at the library location. Mr. Danehey said there will need to be adequate parking at whatever site is chosen. Mr. Gordon Price said all those spaces are shared with the library according to the documentation. Mr. Danehey will find out the parking numbers at this location and get back to Mr. Price. Marilyn O'Brien 12 Meeting House lane would like to see this built at the library. We need a standalone and she does not want anything done at Gates.

Tom McCusker 50 Gannet Pasture Lane is concerned with the heavy traffic on the Driftway for that location.

Mr. Danehey said there are three potential options at the Gates School. One is next to the Little Red Schoolhouse and he is not interested in that location. The other option is to place it next to the old town hall that is now called the C wing. The third location is set back behind Gates Middle School. The Selectmen originally envisioned the senior center going into old Gates School itself. He likes the fact there is a gymnasium and a track there. The auditorium and stage could be brought back. He does not believe it should be inside of Gates. He does like it on the right hand side as a standalone structure.

Mr. Vegnani said there was a master plan to put town hall and the senior center at Gates. He is a proponent of that. He hates to see the school knocked down and put housing there. He wants to keep the property. He thinks Gates will fill up with other functions as well. He does like this area and is not opposed to a standalone building. This was a preferred option according to the survey results.

Mr. Harris isn't sure there is enough room there at Gates for a standalone location. He doesn't think it will fit.

Ms. Canfield likes locating the senior center in the town center. Traffic patterns will need to be reviewed. Having all the access points needs to be redesigned. She likes the recreational facilities for everyone at that site also. There are potential cost offsets as well for fields, etc. CPC will help offset the costs for that site.

Ms. Curran would like to see a standalone senior center at the Gates location. The challenges that were raised can be worked out with the architects. Ms. Hayes said option A offered more expandability. The other site at Gates had no room for expansion. Ms. Curran feels the traffic concerns can be addressed and we have to do something with that land. This location makes a very nice multigenerational campus. It helps the Town answer the question as to what to do with that property. It could be done in phases. Ms. Curran does not have a strong opinion on where on the property it is located. She does not want to take a field off line with the project. Lucille Sorrentino, COA, said there were comments and restrictions on the other locations but none on Gates.

Janice Desmond, COA hopes the Selectmen consider the recommendation as they spent a lot of time on that. Pier 44 keeps coming up and asked the Selectmen to respond to that. Mr. Vegnani said it is not big enough for the needs of the property and there are restrictions on that land. The COA said it would not fill the needs for a senior center. Mr. Danehey said we cannot rebuild it on that land and the parking lot has a view easement across the street.

Joanne Ball said in 1991 Pier 44 was flooded up to the window sills. It is in the high velocity flood plain. Raising it up would require seniors having a difficult time getting into it. She is against putting it in the existing Gates School. It is a long way to get up into the gym at Gates and it would require an elevator. Mr. Danehey said that will need to be handicap accessible to the gym. She has seen 12 different senior centers and feels the cost of building it is too much and it should be built with wood to reduce the cost. It would be too limited to use the existing school and it would not work for Scituate.

Mr. Price wants to comment on multi-generational and the buildings are not it is the intent of the COA to develop these programs in the new senior center. Mr. Price said the big elephant in the room is cost. It would be approximately \$100 on the average tax bill per year. He feels the benefits of the senior center are important and will not be a huge burden on the tax payers.

Ms. Curran said the next steps after this is for the board to discuss the options. After the board decides on a site we need to identify funds on the design and be put forth at town meeting and then to the ballot box for a debt exclusion override.

Mr. Price said FOSS is a very dedicated group and will make a contribution to the cost of the project to reduce the burden to the tax payers.

Tom McCusker 50 Gannet Pasture Lane said the cost has to be a very big factor.

Janet Fairbanks 129 Neal Gate Street said people drive around trying to find the senior center location. She feels they are the orphans of the town and something has to be done now.

Mr. Edward Hanafin 3 Mill Wharf Plaza appreciates the Selectmen and the COA and especially Linda Hayes for all she has done. There are pros and cons for each site. His preference is the Driftway site. He is aware there are some concerns with traffic. The Duxbury site is on 3A and it is not a big issue. The second preference is the library site. A free standing building at Gates may be a workable option but they are totally against going into the school itself.

Marilyn O'Brien, 12 Meeting House Lane is concerned about getting bogged down with the Gates Property and figuring out what they are going to do with the rest of the site.

Mr. Harris feels the existing Gates building is his preference. He likes everything about it. He has been involved with the library project and we are in for quite an awakening but he feels this is how it should go in a phased approach. He does not want to lose the fields. Mr. Vegnani would like to do that also but if he does there would be \$10M put into that building. He hates to see it not used. He is not opposed to another building on that site either.

Karen canfield said having gone through the library project and refurbishing would cost us the same as a new building and be an inferior product. Ms. Curran is an advocate as the senior center being a standalone building. Mr. Danehey agreed with Mr. Harris and Mr. Vegnani said it wasn't until the library project that he changed his mind with asbestos and the other problems that were encountered. He would like to see the town offices there long term.

Sandy Duffy said she wanted Gates at first but the cost to renovate is much too high. She loves the building also but the electric in there is really bad. It cannot be done over in a cost effective manner.

Ms. Curran thanked everyone for the feedback and input. Their eyes were opened up to a couple of different options. Tonight is just choosing a site.

**Mr. Vegnani made a motion to put forth the Gates property as a standalone location.
Motion by Mr. Vegnani second by Mr. Harris Unanimous Vote (5-0)**

Ms. Canfield said there are two factors and one is the recommendation of the COA and the other is that everyone wants Gates to remain useful in our community. Mr. Danehey does like the Driftway property and does not see traffic as an issue. He feels the wind turbine is an issue that is out there. Ms. Curran feels this will solve two problems having the new senior center on the Gates property.

A resident asked how much the Gates property is worth. Mr. Bangert said it is worth \$2.8-3.1M for the entire property.

Deb White-Lyons, 5 Hearthside Court, is not in favor of the Gates location since the infrastructure is a nightmare and the field is used by the freshmen teams along with the tennis team. Where would the students go to use the courts and field? The board is in favor of keeping the tennis courts and will make sure the field is replaced if necessary.

Ms. Curran said now we need to fund a design.

Tom McCusker 50 Gannet Pasture Lane asked the board to reconsider.

Mr. Danehey made a motion for the board to reconsider and second by Mrs. Canfield.

Mr. Danehey wants the board to be united on its decision. His preference is the Driftway or the Library. The board is still strongly of the opinion that Gates is the location. Mr. Danehey is willing to compromise his opinion if that is the position of the board. Ms. Canfield agrees with Mr. Danehey and we are not going to have consensus as a community. We have to support moving this forward to serve our seniors. Mr. Miller said the COA is looking forward to supporting the Selectmen's decision moving forward. Mr. Price agrees with Mr. Miller. He would like a clear statement that the senior center will go forward without any other building projects being melded in with the senior center. Mr. Price wants the senior center to take precedent over town hall.

Dale Balog Wheeler Park Drive wants to commend the board for making a decision to move forward.

All in favor to reconsider the motion by Mr. Danehey. Opposed Ms. Curran, Mr. Harris, Mr. Vegnani, Ms. Canfield 4-1 opposed Mr. Danehey in favor. Motion fails to reconsider the vote.

Open Meeting Law Complaint

Ms. Curran said the board received an open meeting law complaint that is being addressed by our attorney.

Motion to adjourn at 8:22 pm by Mr. Danehey second by Mr. Vegnani Unanimous vote (5-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorraine Devin, Recorder

20171026 bos minutes

List of Documents for October 26, 2017 Board of Selectmen Meeting

- Agenda
- 20170918 Final Senior Center Survey Results
- Open Meeting Law Complaint
- Scituate Senior Center Survey Summary of Comments
- Senior Center Site Feasibility Study

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes for October 26, 2017

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Maura C. Curran, Chairman

Anthony V. Vegnani, Vice Chairman

John F. Danehey, Clerk

Karen B. Canfield

Shawn Harris