

**MEETING MINUTES  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Joint Meeting with the Council on Aging @ Senior Center, 27 Brook Street  
February 14, 2019**

Present: John Danehey, Chairman, Karen Canfield, Shawn Harris, Anthony Vegnani

Council on Aging (COA) Members in attendance: Linda Hayes, COA Director, John Miller, COA Chairman, Leslie James, Lucille Sorrentino, Helen Jablonski, Janice Lindblom, Janice Desmond, Caitlin Coyle, Henry Yeh, Gordon Price

Also present: James Boudreau, Town Administrator, Joel Bargmann, AIA, Principal, Bargmann, Hendrie + Archetype, Inc. (BH+A), and Steven Kirby, Owner Project Manager (OPM), Vertex

Not in attendance: Maura Curran, Selectmen

The Meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

**Acceptance of Agenda**

**Mr. Vegnani made a motion to accept the agenda for February 14, 2019,  
Second by Ms. Canfield Unanimous vote (4-0)**

Mr. Danehey explained that we are meeting tonight to discuss the proposed Senior Center as a follow up to the January 31<sup>st</sup> Selectmen meeting. The Board was discussing the proposed senior center and the recreation department renovations. There were concerns about the building at Gates and as a result of that meeting we were going to include a follow up meeting at the 2/19/19 Board of Selectmen meeting next Tuesday. The Selectmen felt that a meeting was needed jointly with the Council on Aging to discuss options so this meeting was arranged. Last week John Danehey and Maura Curran met with the architect at Gates to discuss some less expensive options. Mr. Danehey thanked Linda Hayes and JD Miller for allowing the Selectmen to hold this joint meeting tonight. Mr. Danehey said we need to have a discussion whether or not to proceed with the current plan as proposed or look at an alternative. The Board of Selectmen are split 3-2 in their opinions. The Selectmen wanted the opinions and input of the Council on Aging members. This is the most important issue before the town. Joel Bargmann from BH+A will present the options this evening.

**SCHEDULED ITEMS:**

**DISCUSSION/VOTE & JOINT MEETING WITH COUNCIL ON AGING** Proposed  
Construction of New Senior Center & Veterans Memorial Gym Rehab

Mr. Bargmann distributed a plan of a proposed option to the group and prepared a presentation for everyone in attendance to view on the projector. Mr. Bargmann said initially the project was a standalone senior center. It was changed to add the Veterans Office, the renovation of the recreation space and add Scituate Community Television (SCTV). There were various options

discussed and reviewed. It was determined the building would be torn down due to the many issues and obstacles with the exception of the gymnasium. They brought the look of the building into the project. The cost estimates came in at the \$19M range and it was felt the cost was too high. After meeting with the Selectmen it was determined the cost was very high. They went back to look at the property again to see what could be done to bring the costs down. They reviewed the original proposed plans at the Gates property. They do not want to impact the fields out behind the building. The architects are looking for the Selectmen to tell them what direction they want them to take.

Over the last week they took the sketches to incorporate the ideas without taking the old Gates School down. The B wing is the center and the A wing is where the recreation department and gym are located. The idea is to not touch the playing fields out back. The site layout was reviewed keeping Gates school with a standalone senior center. Main entrance off of First Parish would be kept but does not circle around. A new parking lot off of Cudworth would service the gym and recreation department. All the features included in the previous plan are included in this plan. Mr. Bargmann reviewed all aspects of the plan design with views inside the proposed senior center. This scheme is \$11.9M, \$8M for the senior center and \$1.2M for the A wing of the recreation building to make it handicap accessible, new roof and restrooms. SCTV would be done in a subsequent year. The Veterans office would be included.

Dr. Price asked looking down the road would there be room for additional development of the senior center or is this site going to be too tight. Mr. Bargmann said there wouldn't be too much space to add on but there would be some. Mr. Boudreau said we would have to run it by Public Building Commission (PBC) but it would not be the lengthy process it was initially since this is the same plan. Dr. Price said it is time that a decision is made on this project. The project just described answers a lot of questions and the burden of passing this project should not be on the back of the Council on Aging. This version is more affordable and meets the need. It is a great project. Janice Lindblom said as a taxpayer you are still left with a white elephant in the room of the Gates School and that cost is only going to go up. Mr. Danehey likes the original plan as proposed but the problem is but some people don't want to see the building torn down. They don't want to kick the can down the road as Ms. Curran said at the last meeting but it is just too expensive. There will be a cost \$80K to heat and maintain the empty building. Lucille Sorrentino has been a resident since 1972 and is tired of the back and forth. There are a lot of people alone and there is a lot of comradery amongst the seniors that use the senior center. Her feeling is this project is really a campus because of the recreation center also. Can we unbundle this for marketing of the project. She is thrilled the Veterans office will be coming in to the building and we should stop calling it the senior center. Mr. Vegnani said it may help to put it together since you will have another whole group of people in support with the gym renovations. Mr. Danehey wants to make sure we vet this collectively as a group. Ms. Canfield said the conversation cannot happen until we decide if we stick with the original plan or choose this plan. We were all concerned when the numbers came in so high. Ms. Canfield thinks the first plan is a great plan. It makes a campus, in the right place. We won't abandon the building which will cost more down the road to renovate. Not to know what will happen to the B wing concerns her greatly. The new plan ignores the main building. She would rather get behind doing it right the first time. Ms. Curran feels similar to Ms. Canfield and authorized Ms. Canfield to mention that tonight. Janice Lindblom and John Miller said they agree with the original plan. Mr. Miller said

the plan tonight puts a new building on the Gates campus. The original plan is a better plan for the Town of Scituate as a whole. Dr. Price said what assurance do any of us have that a \$20M plan will pass as opposed to an \$11M plan? Mr. Vegnani said Joel did a great job. People think the cost to knock the building down later will be more and nobody knows that. We are using the A wing now for recreation. The B wing not so much. He thinks there may be an opportunity for the B wing in the future but he does not know what that is. He has concerns with the project for the recreation section. Ms. Sorrentino agrees that there may be something with the B wing in the future. The people that want to keep Gates up are a very vocal group. Mr. Harris said the C wing can go but this new option tonight accomplishes everything. Mr. Harris said if we knock down the B wing it may not pass. Janice Desmond asked why the Senior Center has to be on the Gates campus and there seems to be a lot of focus on recreation. Mr. Danehey said the focus has been on the senior center and the Board has been talking about a new senior center since 2011 and it has been a priority. We have been vetting this since its failure. Linda Hayes said when we initiated this project we included recreation so it would pass. She felt we were serving so many needs rather than just the senior center. Dr. Price said we don't have to deal with Gates at this time. Ms. Sorrentino said in 1996 she was talking with some developers and there is a wait list to get into Meeting House Lane housing now. If we found a developer that would want to put nice condos in there the town could get revenue. Ms. Canfield said we do know it would be extremely expensive to renovate that building. It is an unknown and a town asset that may not be developed for a very long time. Ms. Canfield said it is the Board's job to show leadership and put a good package out to the town. We would like it to cost less and we need value engineering since it is expensive. Whatever we decide Ms. Canfield will support whatever everyone wants to do. Mr. Danehey said the current issue; what is the Council on Aging views on the two options. It was in the \$22-\$25M range to keep the A wing as is with the required improvements. Dr. Price asked about the scheme with the stand alone senior center and the A wing what needs to be done. Joel said, when you disengage the A wing from the core the separate services have to be brought in and that's why the cost increase so much.

Mr. Danehey wants to open up with questions from the public.

Jack Whelan, 51 Oakhurst Road is thanking everyone for all the work done. He is here for the senior center. He likes the design. If you take the \$8M building put it behind the Gates. Find a spot on Gates property to put the building. He would like to see the senior center get done. He thanked Mr. Danehey and said he has done a great job over the years.

Ed Katersky 14 Aberdeen Drive attended the Historical Commission meeting and there were a lot of people who did not want to tear down the school. At that time he was an advocate to tear down the school but he has changed his mind. This is a good compromise and it is not necessary to address the future use of Gates building and say it will be considered in the future.

Janet DeMatteo, 44 Hatchet Rock Road asked if we will keep the old Gates and we will pay at least \$80K per year to maintain the property. The beautiful new building will be next to the old Gates who are vandalizing the building. What's to say they will not vandalize the new building? The safety of the abandoned building is a big concern. We are wasting money.

Mr. Harris said the new facility will generate more activity. Recreation will continue to be there. He feels there will be less trouble there.

Katherine Seton, 26 Doctors Hill thanked everyone for all the work. Either proposal will be a hard sell. She does not like to see Gates abandoned and supports plan A. This project is not a senior center it is a town project and needs to be renamed. We can address a lot more people in town. She feels there will be money.

Jan Ye 16 Wood Island Road appreciates everyone together at this time. The senior center has been a desire in the Town of Scituate for many years. Lucille Sorrentino knows what she is talking about. She is here to see a senior center built and utilized. She would support either plan.

Marilyn O'Brien 12 Meeting House Lane would like to see this done. We need to move forward now with this project. She is in favor of the new option and would like to see in her lifetime.

Lou Chin 42 Tilden Road was on the school committee when they got the first successful override in the Town of Scituate. We appreciated it took a town wide effort to get the vote. There are too many diverse opinions in this town. We need a town proposal for this. We had no good idea of what we're going to do with the B wing. He feels there is some value in that building. We should leave it alone. He doesn't know the answer but these are the things we need to look at. It would be a mistake to tear down the B building. Marketing is the key and we should solve some problems for the recreation department. What made the override in the 90's work was the whole town being involved.

Denise Price, 48 Mann Lot Road agrees with Lou and agrees to include recreation.

Carol King, Wheeler Park Drive is concerned about putting the senior center in the front yard of the Gates school. She is concerned what may go into the Gates building in the future. Why can't the senior center go on the Driftway? Mr. Danehey said we'd have to have a town meeting to swap the land with the Housing Authority. The town does not own that land and there is a deed restriction. In order for the town to build there we'd have to buy it or swap the land. It will take time and it would take approximately two years out. Mr. Vegnani said the town would be giving up a very large piece of land to do this swap for the land behind the library.

Mr. Danehey said depending on the future we may have to remove the tennis courts or part of the fields for more parking in the future.

Mr. Danehey likes the new plan B that was presented tonight. We need to decide the timing for the spring town meeting or a fall town meeting. It needs to be done as soon as possible. The designs are there but we need to discuss this tonight and decide when we will bring it forth to the town. The B wing is 41,000 square feet.

The Selectmen would like the Council on Aging's opinion on which plan they would like to move forward with.

Jim Boudreau, Town Administrator said if we are significantly changing the design we have to go back to the PBC, the finance committee and capital planning. If we put it on a June town

meeting this would be the only topic on that town meeting. You can schedule a ballot vote before or after town meeting.

Mr. Vegnani said there is a recreation component at town meeting in April and it would be beneficial if we put both of them on the April town meeting.

Ed Katersky 14 Aberdeen Drive said there is a concern about construction issues and elevating costs. He would like to see it approved in April and start construction in September.

Larry Guilmette, 49 Hughey Road asked Steve and Joel about timing and would they be in a position to have all the numbers needed for an April meeting? Based on the original design yes they would. With the redesign they would like to get a cost estimate again but believe it can be done in the time frame for the April meeting.

Dr. Price does not think we can get a price approved for \$19M. He thinks we should go with the plan for the stand alone center.

Mr. Vegnani said there is no unflawed plan. This meeting may affect voters with the lower priced proposal.

Mr. Miller asked if it was safe to say with original option we can go to April town meeting. Option 2 presented tonight would need to go to a future town meeting possibly in June.

Dr. Price, Council on Aging member made a motion to move ahead with plan B presented this evening second by Mr. Yeh voted in favor (5-3) Motion passes

Ms. Canfield made a motion to move forward with plan A. There was no second motion fails.

Mr. Vegnani made a motion to move forward with Plan B presented this evening second by Mr. Harris (Harris, Vegnani, Danehey in favor and Canfield against 3-1 in favor) motion passes.

Mr. Boudreau said Mr. Danehey can participate remotely on Tuesday nights Selectmen meeting.

Mr. Danehey said in order to pass it will require a debt exclusion override which means there will need to be a vote at the ballot. He suggests a town meeting on Tuesday and vote it on Saturday.

Mr. Vegnani said he doesn't want to decide if we are not ready tonight. He would like to see it go forward for the April meeting. He would like to aim for April the sooner the better.

Mr. Danehey asked the Council on Aging and Selectmen to discuss if they want this to be on the April Town meeting. Dr. Price asked if the architect can have drawings ready. Joel said two weeks.

Ms. Holt said the average impact to taxpayers would be \$149 the first year and go down from there to about \$110 per home for 20 years.

Jean Young 179 Captain Pierce Road asked where the senior center article will be placed on the warrant. Ms. Holt said it is in the special town meeting and number 3 on the annual town meeting, so earlier in the evening.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

1. Adjournment and Signing of Documents

Ms. Canfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. second by Mr. Harris  
Unanimous Vote (4-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorraine Devin, Recorder

**List of Documents for February 14, 2019 Board of Selectmen Meeting**

- Agenda
- Siting Scheme 1-4
- Scituate Senior Center and Recreation Center Plan B with standalone center on Gates property

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes for February 14, 2019

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

---

John F. Danehey, Chairman

Not in attendance

---

Maura C. Curran, Vice Chairman

---

Karen B. Canfield, Clerk

---

Shawn Harris

---

Anthony V. Vegnani