

Senior Center Building Committee Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2023

In Attendance: Bobbi Grant, Rita Vail, Gary Weiner, Carol Keeney, Don Collins, John Matthews, Mike Fedora, Mike Doran, Cliff Bombard, John Flynn (ex-officio), Becky Moriarty (ex-officio)

Guests: Chris Wante, edmStudio & Doug Gallow, Lifespan Design

Don Collins called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM and welcomed new member Mike Doran.

Minutes from 11/20/23. John Matthews motion to approve. Bobbi seconded. All in favor.

Chris: Main goal is to try to get everyone on the same page regarding what the goal is for the expansion/renovation. Chris will use the feasibility study as the starting point for this meeting. Start with the Program Verification document to discuss the programmatic needs of the building.

Gary addressed the needs assessment that was completed by the committee and the staff. Provided copies of the results to the group.

Chris has a copy of the square footage sheet provided by the committee and will reference that as we move through the meeting.

Doug will walk through the program verification. Historically there are three main components that typically need to be addressed in senior center design storage, restrooms, and parking. Storage is certainly a major need with this project.

Doug explained the process that took place three years ago when the feasibility study was completed. Space needs are evaluated by looking at activities and furniture layouts and what the operational needs are within each space and describes the process for determining square footage of a given space. Doug talked about creating different sized rooms within a space and explained how the feasibility study was designed.

Storage is an issue within the current building. Doug referenced the program verification list and went through the list with discussion about different room needs and program spaces, offices, storage, restrooms, etc.

In general, storage space doesn't get designed, it gets identified. Doug thinks it's important to design storage space with things like shelving, cabinet, carts, etc.

Restrooms need to meet the need of an older adult population. There need to be enough restrooms and they need to be designed for people who use adaptive equipment (canes, walkers). Doorless restrooms were considered when the feasibility was done.

Some additional items that were addressed included a café, boutique, washer/dryer, and companion restrooms.

Doug talked about the parking lot and what he observed in the parking lot. People are walking where cars are driving and there is no focus on the safety of pedestrians. Understanding that the parking lot would not need to be addressed at this time, but it was discussed as it was a part of the feasibility study. Over the last 15 years, there has been a shift to more drop in space/lounge space. Doug talked about the addition of more lounge space/seating areas in the feasibility study.

Carol: do we know where the building could be expanded? Chris showed a plan that highlighted where the addition could go with relation to the current building.

Carol made a suggestion about expanding the kitchen into the great room closet. Carol explained that when large events are happening, there isn't enough room in the kitchen.

Don: areas needed are program space, offices, and storage. Don thought if we focused on one area at a time, it might be easier to address by looking at each category.

Gary: asked if the set back line is 60 or 75 feet. It is 60 feet. The wetland line is probably a little bit farther away than what is shown on the diagram displayed by Chris.

Mike Doran: any thought about expanding in both areas? Toward the road and to the back? Chris stated that it is certainly a possibility.

Gary: restrooms. With an expansion, will there be a need for additional restrooms? Doug stated that a code count had not yet been completed. From the feasibility there was the thought to add 3 more toilets. A new and improved senior center will draw more people and that could generate a need for more restrooms. Doug explained that a companion rest room is an ideal addition.

Bobbi: looking at custodial closet area and café and talked about the back patio area that doesn't get utilized often. Bobbi asked about utilizing the outdoor patio to expand restrooms/custodial closet.

Carol asked if the committee has a drawing of the buildable area. Chris can share that document with the committee.

John Matthews is concerned about the flow within the building and would like it to be better. Doug commented on design flow and how that is achieved.

Rita: would like to see the outreach office back to health office to serve foot care, blood pressure, etc. Rita doesn't like the feasibility study because the windows in the craft room will be lost. Rita would like to see the nurse office/companion restroom over next to the current outreach space where there is water hook up. Rita would like to see the addition go out the back hallway past the current pool room and janitor's closet. Rita was very honest in saying that she hated the feasibility study when it originally came out.

Mike Doran: has there been talk about disruption of services while construction has been going on? Chris knows that the senior center must function during construction. Doug commented that working around current programming can add costs to the project.

Becky added that the building could be closed at certain times during a construction process. John Matthews stated that the building could be flexible with the contractors.

Don: question on office space. Three are shown on the feasibility study. Questions about the need for full time transportation office. Question on the nurse's office that shows a sink and is there a need for a shower service. Becky talked about the building being an emergency shelter and at that time there was a need for showering facilities, and she talked about the nursing services currently happening in the library, so a nursing office is needed, but people do not come in to take a shower. Don mentioned that there are shower facilities at the police department next door. Don also asks about the office spaces and if there is a need for three or if it should be two.

Rita: discussed office spaces. Rita would like to move the outreach office and thinks two additional offices would be adequate for the current needs. Doug explained why the nurse's office was not put on an outside wall where there are windows.

Becky talked about the office space and how certain programs could be combined within the proposed spaces.

John Matthews: asked if we would be limiting ourselves if we decreased the number of office spaces that are made available.

Talk about the future and are current part time positions transitioned into full time positions.

John M. discussion about the café. Does it bring people and revenue in? Is it attached to the kitchen facilities?

Doug talked about people who are currently coming into the building that might not have been coming in prior to today. Programs and services have changed over the last 40 years. Doug does not want to band aid the situation but wants to really focus on the future planning of the building.

Mike F: discussed the back patio. Is it possible to go out even farther out the back patio? Mike F. talked about his ideas of expanding out of the back of the library. There will be critical coordination on a week-to-week basis with the contractors.

Talk about expanding more to the south as opposed to the expansion to the west. Discussion of the roof lines. Doug talked about options for other designs and the flow of the building. Underground utilities are at the back of the building. Will need to find those and there will be a cost to relocate.

There will be a presentation of different options and what the costs are associated with each option.

Bobbi asked about expanded storage off the great room kitchen and wondered if the transformer pad would be in the way of an expansion of that closet. Bobbi wonders if the amount of space gained in that closet, is it worth it to pay the cost to relocate the transformer pad. Bobbi stated that with additional rooms there will be more storage in each room and perhaps the additional closet expansion in the great room would not have to happen.

Discussion of alternate design plans.

Gary talked about how the committee was tasked with creating a design that plans for at least 25 years. Gary feels that an additional personal needs room would be good so there isn't a space issue 10 years down the road.

Discussion about computer rooms and technology. Options for desktops vs laptop computers.

Discussion of a possible permanent wall in the great room. Rita doesn't think there should be a permanent wall in the great room because of the proximity of the great room to the kitchen. Rita asked about the top right-hand door on the design and Chris said it is probably a design error.

Rita asked about soft costs and felt the percentage was very high as previously reported. She said research showed average soft costs for Senior Center renovations and expansion was about 18%. Chris stated that those should be 20-30% of the total cost. Discussion as to what falls under soft costs. Rita asked if two architects were being paid out of soft costs? Doug explained that design fees all fall under soft costs. Having multiple architects on a design team is not unheard of. Chris explained that typical soft costs are furniture, technology equipment, design fees, and contingencies. Construction contingency and design contingency. Permitting can also be included in those fees.

The committee took a break for lunch at 12:40PM and reconvened at 1:15PM.

Gary: New building codes in the state. 7500 square feet will require a sprinkler system. What kind of dollars are in question when looking at a sprinkler system. From 2020 there has probably been a 10-15% increase in cost. The entire building would have to be sprinklered. Doug commented that the feeling about sprinkler systems is "why wouldn't you" when looking at life safety.

Would there be a water tank required? Chris stated there would have to be a fire pump of some type, but it is all preliminary at this point and will have to be explored.

Storage discussion. Rita asked if when every room is created, is the need for storage considered? Doug responded that yes, storage is a consideration in every room. Three different types of storage: activity storage (items needed for classes and project work), general storage (holiday décor, office supplies), furniture storage.

John M do they make tables and chairs that are easily storable? Doug: Yes, there are wheeled tables that nest or fold up to make storage easier. Stackable chairs (not typically folding chairs) with arms generally 8-10 chairs per stack. No chairs with wheels. More discussion about chairs.

Don referenced the different variety of storage needs throughout the building and the idea of putting cabinets along the walls of certain rooms in the existing building.

Rita asked if there is a room that isn't newly designed, would there be recommendations for additional storage? Doug explained that every room in the building will be looked at and storage needs will be addressed.

Doug talked about the round tables in the great room and finding that 36"x36" tables are easier to group. Some situations require a different table size depending on the program.

Carol asked about coat closets and storage. Doug explained that coat closets are not favorable because they are unsightly. Doug prefers coat hooks in every activity room and explained what that would look like.

Rita thinks that private organizations should not be storing items in the senior center, and it is difficult to enforce. Doug stated the reasoning given could be "New Senior Center, new rules".

Carol noted that the lighting in the craft room is terrible. Doug discussed that there are lighting guidelines for older adults.

Becky asked about flooring in the new multi-purpose area as there will be exercise classes happening in that space and is there a way to have an exercise friendly floor and still have a multipurpose room. Doug talked about Luxury vinyl flooring which has a bit of cushion to it. There can be different thicknesses of flooring that can be considered. There are athletic floors as well. Doug also talked about carpeting options (flocked flooring). Cork and linoleum floors are also options.

John M asked about radiant heat flooring which is more efficient.

Don asked about the potential for a conference room. Becky talked about what options could be done in the conference/smaller multipurpose room. The programs that are currently happening in the library could be relocated to a space like that. Becky thinks that a conference/small multipurpose room would be utilized on a regular basis.

Rita would like to know what the next steps are in the process. Chris would like to know what spaces are being considered for the expansion. Chris and Doug will work on rearranging the space and coming up with options for a new design. There could be 3-6 designs at the beginning and then have the committee look at the options and come to some decisions.

John M. talked about the Lounge/Library area not being in the best location and how it is in a place that is not the quietest place in the building. John stated again that he is very concerned about the flow of the building.

Bobbi talked about the front door entrance and moving it and how that would impact the sign in process. Doug explained that the sign in would also have to be moved if the front door was moved.

Rita asked if there would be a cost associated with every design? Chris explained that there would be a maximum and minimum but there won't be specific dollar amounts at this time. The plans will include square footage estimates.

Don thinks the pool room is currently oversized. Doug stated that there needs to be a 5-foot clearance around each table.

Rita agrees that we need a multipurpose room and meeting/conference room and thinks there needs to be 2 additional office spaces. Rita does not value a separate café and that it could be part of the great room/kitchen. Storage is necessary and space for a washer and dryer and janitor's closet back to the original purpose.

Doug commented that as membership increases is the potential for expanding the hours of the building. Additional staffing costs would have to be incurred, but it could help to alleviate any crowding. There are some centers that are open 7 days per week. Currently the building is open 6 hours per day.

Rita spoke to the hours of operation of the senior center. Rita stated that it allows for 25% more program space. At least two people are paid full-time at the senior center and Rita feels strongly that the building should be open more hours per week. Becky spoke to how the scheduling happens now and how readjusting the schedule would take time to achieve. Becky also explained that other senior centers that are open earlier in the day and later in the afternoon do not all have classes scheduled during those hours. Becky stated that it is not completely off the table to open the building for more hours per day.

Chris: number of offices and café. Where is the rest of the committee on this? The committee likes the idea of a café.

Gary understands that \$5,000 has been allocated by the Selectmen to the committee for expenses. Gary would like to have Title V done on the septic. Gary will get quotes for the Title V. John M made a motion asking Gary to solicit quotes for Title V inspection. Rita seconded. All in favor.

Next meeting is on Wednesday, January 3, 2023. Becky will contact the police department to use their meeting room as the senior center craft room is being used for art classes all day.

Rita motion to adjourn. John M seconded. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40PM.

Next meeting:
Meeting 1/3/23 at 11:00 AM

Respectfully Submitted for the Secretary: Rebecca C. Moriarty, Executive Director (Ex-Officio)