

Meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM on Thursday, February 5, 2009.

Members present:

Anita Benware

Irene Camerano, Treasurer

Constance Cleary

Barbara Foster, Vice Chair

Mary Higgins

Debra MacLennan

Peter Watson

Absent: Sharon Bloom, Chair, Ellen Sesia, Secretary, Ken Day, Associate

Karen Phillips, Director, Terri Ackerman, Town Administrator, and Mark Brodeur, Building Inspector were also in attendance.

Due to the absence of our secretary, the roll was called by Irene Camerano and the Minutes were read by Constance Cleary.

The minutes of the January meeting were read. There being no errors or omissions, a motion was made by Peter Watson and seconded by Connie Cleary to accept the minutes as read.

The Treasurer's report was read and accepted.

The ham and bean supper was briefly discussed. Karen reported that Maureen Cranson has not yet returned her call regarding the date, March 21. As soon as confirmed, we will proceed.

Karen stated that our state grant has been reduced from \$7.00 an elder to \$6.50 an elder. We have already received ½ of the allotted funds. The next check will reflect the modest cut. Karen explained that the money is used for the newsletter printing and mailing and for subsidizing exercise and yoga.

The volunteer recognition will be held on Monday, April 27th at 1 PM. Thanks to the Cultural Council, we will have a storyteller as entertainment. Last year we thanked about 100 people. The number may be greater this year. As our appreciation gift, we discussed a flashlight, an oven mitt, or a fabric grocery bag "The Big Thunder". After some discussion, a motion was made by Irene Camerano, seconded by Mary Higgins to buy the grocery bag. All in favor.

At this time, both Terri Ackerman and Mark Brodeur joined us for a discussion regarding the new Senior Center. Karen noted that a diagram of the Twin Oaks property and the present and future design of the Sterling Inn were included with the minutes. We first discussed the walkthrough at Twin Oaks on January 28th. The board was joined by owner Terry Heinold, Selectmen Don Murray and Dick Sheppard,

and Terri Ackerman, Town Administrator. Upon completion of the walk, both inside and outside, a question and answer period was held. We backtracked briefly and Terri Ackerman explained that she has repeatedly tried to find someone (owner, real estate agent, etc) to set up a walkthrough of the Sterling Inn. She has been unsuccessful in her endeavors. She encouraged the board to independently contact someone should the opportunity arise and to have someone contact her. Terri noted that the Selectmen do not have an agenda regarding the Twin Oaks property, as far as ball fields or housing are concerned. She did state that they are interested in hearing our thoughts and ideas and are very willing to work with the board. We then went on to discuss, in great length, the pros and cons of the property. Mark Brodeur was asked about the structure of the building. He stated that it definitely has issues and needs major renovation to meet our needs. He answered questions regarding housing, stating he does not see that it would be possible. He also stated that the property could probably hold one baseball field.

Cons	Pros
2000 sq. feet short of ideal 7000 sq. feet	Has potential
Huge, ugly kitchen	Only ½ kitchen is needed
As is condition will lead to a major clean up	New handicapped bathrooms with shower
Musty odor	Could easily be incorporated into new plans
Dangerous driveway	Mark would insist on a generator
Too far from center of town	Could be used as a shelter
No handicapped bathroom, no office, no small room for nurse and SHINE	Outside could have gardens, picnic tables, walking trail
No room for 2 functions at the same time	gazebo

Peter made the point that during the 5 years he has been a board member, the new center has been a constant item up for discussion by the board. This year seems to be the first time that the BOS has been willing to really listen to the board, to our ideas, concerns, and frustrations and that they are putting forth the time and energy to seriously consider a new center.

Terri commented that the only thing that is really needed tonight is a decision as to whether we want to go forward with exploring Twin Oaks further. We need to decide if we would be better off where we are or if we are committed to continuing our search. Mark and Peter agreed to return to the Twin Oaks to take a more in depth look at the back wall, crawl space, etc. and would report back. Peter will make arrangements with Terry Heinold.

Terri Ackerman mentioned how difficult it can be to sell something at a town meeting. We need to be sure of what we want. Mark made the comment that if and or when we do go to town meeting, we should have a package that people can read and understand. We also need an articulate, think on their feet spokesperson, able to get our point across in a pragmatic way.

A non-binding vote was taken upon a motion made by Constance Cleary to continue with investigating the Twin Oaks property. Said motion was seconded by Peter Watson. All in favor; it was so voted.

Terri stated she would approach the Finance Committee regarding money for an architectural study and plan to be done before going to town meeting. (Town meeting is May 11th at 7 PM at Chocksett School.) Our discussion came to a close. We thanked Terri and Mark and continued with our meeting.

Irene Camerano expressed concern that we're forgetting about the property behind the Butterick Building. We are going to spend \$900,000 to buy property when we have land right out back that could be blasted and build a new building. Peter questioned the blasting, getting the rock out, and what kind of septic system would be needed. He felt that the space would be limited.

The acting chair recognized Malcolm Smiley, 69 Kendall Hill Road, who had questions related to blasting: what we were talking about and how much. We informed Mr. Smiley that it really is a moot subject as we are going to concentrate on the Twin Oaks property at least for the time being. Mr. Smiley stated he had nothing to say regarding Twin Oaks.

Karen expressed disappointment when we were doing the feasibility study, the BOS did not step in and say they wanted us to consider the Twin Oaks property. We could have included it in the study and be further ahead than we are now and have something to compare. Peter was very displeased with MRPC, who did the feasibility study. A representative would be called and no one would show up and when she did show up, she did not know what she was talking about. He feels that they wasted a lot of time and money.

It was then reiterated that we've made a non-binding vote to proceed with the Twin Oaks property. Whether it is our final decision or not, we will go further until further notice. Irene Camerano made a motion to table the discussion. Constance Cleary seconded. All were in favor; so voted.

Karen reminded us that the town meeting is on May 11th at 7 PM at the Chocksett School. February 24th is the deadline for articles. We will have 2, maybe 3 articles on the agenda:

- 1) The revolving account. It was to be voted upon at town meeting to allow us to keep the account.
- 2) Tax work off. Karen didn't know if it would be under us or the BOS. This appropriates money for the program so that seniors can work for the town and receive a tax break.
- 3) Senior Center. There is a place holder right now in case we can go forward by town meeting.

Irene questioned the revolving account. Karen explained it has to be voted upon in order to keep it. It has been on the last few town warrants and has always passed. We are asking to have up to \$45,000.

Karen mentioned that we will be buying a new stove this year from capital money voted at last year's town meeting. We replace our appliances every 5 years. Next year we will be replacing the dishwasher, if approved at town meeting.

Karen was contacted by Boy Scout Zach Bodine. He would like to arrange a date to come and speak to the seniors in March on energy savings. He would like to come on a Wednesday after lunch and then do a workshop on a Thursday night. We would have to have someone here to open up. Peter volunteered.

Karen received an email from the finance committee. They have no questions for us about the budget. They said our 10% reduction scenario was one of the best. We do not have to attend the meeting on February 10th. The only question related to our spare drivers. Karen informed the finance committee that the spare drivers cover sick and vacation time as well as special events on nights or weekends. Connie congratulated Karen on doing such a great job. As of right now, no cuts have been discussed for the COA. Sterling is usually financially conservative, so we're weathering things better than most towns.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, March 5th at 4 PM.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Constance Cleary and seconded by Peter Watson to adjourn the meeting. All in favor; so voted. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Foster, vice chair
Secretary Pro Tem