

Sterling Senior Center Design and Building Committee

Butterick Municipal Building - COA Room

May 16, 2013 - 6:30 pm

MINUTES

Present: Jack Chandler, Maureen Cranson, Richard Maki and Weymouth Whitney. Ex Officio: Karen Phillips. **Absent:** Ronald Cote, Peter Watson. Ex Officio: Terri Ackerman. Public Present: Sharon Bloom, Robert Bloom, Kevin Beaupre, Barbara Foster.

Open Meeting: Co-Chairman Cranson opened the meeting at 6:35 pm.

Minutes: The minutes of May 2, 2013 were approved following a motion by Mr. Chandler and second by Mr. Whitney. VOTE: YEA = 4, NAY = 0, ABS = 0. The minutes of May 8, 2013 were approved following a motion by Mr. Whitney and second by Mr. Chandler. VOTE: YEA = 3, NAY = 0, ABS = 1.

Public Comments: None. Ms. Cranson invited comments throughout the meeting by members of the public.

Review Annual Town Meeting: The Board discussed the public statement by the Chairman of the Planning Board, Mr. Ronald Pichierri, in which he said that the PB had voted against the project, 5 – 0. The Building Committee felt that they should correct the record by writing to the media, the Planning Board, Selectmen and Town Administrator citing the following facts as we know them:

- Meetings with the Planning Board were informational only in an attempt to make them aware of senior center planning progress and to solicit any recommendations and procedural input from the Board.
- At no point were any formal plans presented for Board approval as no architect had been hired and no building plans were yet available.
- The Board expressed their concern about the traffic flow at the proposed site and told Committee members that a traffic study would be needed.
- No vote was recorded because no formal plan was before the Board. Review of the PB minutes fail to show any official requests from the Senior Center Building Committee before Planning board that would require their approval, nor is there any record of any vote rejecting the project.

Comments by Planning Board Chairman Pichierri at the ATM may have lead voters to believe that the PB had reviewed a formal submission for construction of the senior center, possibly determining that elements of the plan failed to meet local and state bylaws and regulations, and that they formally took a recorded vote to deny the application. As previously stated, none of these actions occurred and the ATM representations of Board actions by the PB Chairman may have seriously damaged the viability of a Town project. Mr. Pichierri has every right as a private citizen to express his opinion on any matter before the ATM. By speaking as Chairman of the Planning Board and stating the results of a vote that did not occur, nor appears in the Board minutes, the Building Committee feels that, at the least, public refutation of his remarks is needed and possible further investigation may be appropriate.

The Building Committee voted to send letters to the media and other officials. VOTE: YEA = 4, NAY = 0, ABS = 0.

Continuing discussion of the ATM, Mr. Beaupre asked what Committee members “heard at the meeting”. He volunteered that two common points emerged: while there was concern over the tax impact of the project, there was little negative comment about the \$2.5 M cost. He also shared that some audience members wanted the word “community” to appear in the building name. The Committee has no objection to inclusion of the term with one possible resolution being “Sterling Senior-Community Center”. There was discussion of possible insurance implications associated with providing total public access beyond town boards, committees, and other town functions. Mr. Whitney suggested that portions of the building could be locked off minimizing issues that could arise from abuse of the building by groups using the center. Other felt that misuse of the building could result in a denial of future use and/or forfeiture of any “rental” charges that may be assessed.

Open Discussion: The topics of prevailing wage for the project were discussed along with the need for the COA to better publicize expanded programs already envisioned and dependant upon the final building configuration.

Mr. Beaupre suggested talking with members of the Light Board regarding how consolidation of their facilities into the Webster property might make new space available for a senior center. The negative effect of taking the property off of the tax roles was mentioned. The Town has already voted to approve the Boutelle and Muddy Pond site.

Next Steps: Mr. Jamie Rheault, of Whitman and Bingham, is invited to the next meeting of the Committee. Ms. Cranson will talk with Paul Sushchuk, will meet with potential donors to a future senior center and will collaborate with Mr. Maki to prepare a written response to concerns related to the Planning Board. Ms. Cranson will contact Mr. Carl Strate to determine his future Committee involvement as well as confirm the continued participation by members not present at this meeting. Two residents, Mr. Beaupre and Mr. Bloom expressed interest in joining the Committee if future positions become available.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 22, 2013 at 6:30 pm in the COA room.

Adjournment: The Committee adjourned at 8:32 pm following a motion by Mr. Whitney and second by Mr. Chandler. VOTE: YEA – 4, NAY = 0.

Respectfully submitted by

Richard H. Maki

Richard H. Maki, Clerk