

STERLING SENIOR CENTER COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The Sterling Senior Center Committee, in response to the charge assigned to it by the Sterling Board of Selectmen, makes the following recommendations:

Part One

The Committee recommends that an action plan, as herein delineated, be adopted and implemented by the Sterling Council on Aging and monitored by the Board of Selectmen. This plan should be fully implemented within a time period of approximately one year from the date of this report. The five components of this plan are as follows:

1. The Council on Aging, the Senior Center staff or their agents, representatives or designees should thoroughly research, diligently apply for and aggressively pursue grants and, subject to the requirements of Massachusetts law, other forms of financial assistance to support existing and expanded programs and services for Sterling's senior citizens, including the funding of a new facility for the Sterling Senior Center.

2. The Council on Aging should endorse and support the establishment of an organization that may be known as "The Friends of Sterling's Seniors", or some other appropriate designation, for the purpose of raising and furnishing financial support for the Sterling Senior Center and for other programs and services to benefit the Town's senior citizens.

3. The Council on Aging, the Senior Center staff or their designees should recruit, organize and maintain a viable and effective network of volunteers who can assist in the operation of existing programs and services and the development and organization of expanded programs and services. To the extent that volunteers are currently available and willing to serve, they should be utilized

immediately for these purposes, in order to achieve a level of support for Sterling's senior citizens that is as high as possible.

4. The Council on Aging, the Senior Center staff or their designees should develop and sustain an effective "outreach" component as part of its program of services. This component should include a plan for the delivery of appropriate services to senior citizens of Sterling who are unable to visit the Senior Center and such a plan should be implemented during the time period set forth in Part One of this report.

5. The Council on Aging and the Senior Center staff should expand and increase programs and services for seniors, including programs and services which, if necessary, can be provided at other sites currently available in Sterling, as well as programs and services that may not require a physical site. This expansion should be the result of an evaluation of programs conducted in other communities and an analysis of what would constitute an adequate and appropriate level of services, regardless of the physical limitations of the existing Senior Center. Over the next year, a system should be put in place, utilizing new and improved programs designed for this purpose, to accurately measure both daily and special event participation or usage by seniors, as well as participation by volunteers, with a goal of achieving 40% increased usage, over the current number of 250 users, within the next year.

Part Two

Assuming Part One of these recommendations is implemented to the satisfaction of the Board of Selectmen, the Committee recommends that a commitment be made by the Town of Sterling to erect a new senior center, consisting of a minimum of 5,000 square feet, on land currently owned by the Town at the corner of Boutelle and Muddy Pond Roads. The Committee further suggests that the Town immediately take appropriate action to designate or "earmark" this land for this purpose. In the event this site is not usable for any reason the Committee recommends a secondary site of land owned by the Town located at the corner of Griffin and Muddy Pond Roads.

Assuming ongoing implementation of Part One, the Committee recommends that the Board of Selectmen establish a committee or task force, comprised of qualified citizens of Sterling, to make appropriate recommendations regarding the physical construction of a building on the chosen site to house a new senior center. The Committee recommends, **as a goal**, that 50% or more of the cost of construction of a new facility should be covered from sources other than local taxation. Assuming compliance with the recommendations in this report, and approval by the voters, construction of a new Sterling Senior Center should begin as soon as possible.

DATE: November 7, 2011

Respectfully submitted,
The Sterling Senior Center Committee

Sharon Bloom, Chair

Greg Aubin

Kevin Beaupre

Jack Chandler

Patrick Fox

John Kilcoyne

James Simpson