

Senior Center Site Selection Working Group  
August 25, 2016  
3:00 p.m.  
Old Water Room, Town Hall

Present were Jill Bishop, Dick Bowen, Joe Clancy, Sallie Giffen, Robert Leary, Brenda Swain, James Vieira (chairman), Wendy Vogel, Julian Suso (town manager), and Meg Costello (recording secretary).

J. Vieira called the meeting to order at 3:01.

**Coonamesett Inn now being considered**

J. Vieira asked J. Suso, in the absence of consultant Joel Bargmann, to update the group about the Coonamesett's evaluation. J. Suso thanked all those who had toured Coonamesett. He handed out pages from J. Bargmann's "work in progress," and hoped the final report would be available for Monday's Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting. The handout shows the dimensions of the Inn, and includes an early draft of the structural engineer's observations, with photographs.

After everyone read the handout, J. Vieira asked members to fill out privately the same score sheet used to rank the other sites. He encouraged comments as he read out the criteria being scored. Most criteria were ticked off without substantial discussion, with the following exceptions.

**Cost of development**, said J. Vieira, was unknown, and would include costs both to acquire and renovate. J. Suso said no price was being discussed and that tax revenue would not be lost, other than lodging tax. Negotiations with the seller comprised privileged information, pending the BOS executive session on Monday night. J. Vieira read a letter from Ray Young, who was unable to attend this meeting. He had concerns about renovation needs and the unknown history of maintenance. He felt a new building, with predictable costs, is the answer.

**Parking availability** J. Clancy said parking is a challenge. Mr. Zammer has agreements to use the Methodist church lot and Homeport lot. J. Vieira said this was dependent on a special permit from the ZBA. With a change of use, this permit would be reconsidered. J. Suso said a zoning change might be needed. He also pointed out that the Gifford/Jones intersection is slated for a major upgrade soon.

**Access to sewer** The site now has an alternate septic system, which, according to research by J. Vieira, is not overseen by the local board of health, but by the EPA and state. Its capacity is greater than the senior center needs, and it uses electricity 24/7. It would be helpful to know what other uses the town might put on site, to determine what type of septic is needed. J. Suso noted the current system, though expensive, is in good shape. The sewer on Main street could be extended in the future. The high school sites would also need sewer extensions.

**Access to recreational assets** J. Clancy said there are none on site, other than the vista. J. Suso pointed out that many seniors use the pool next door at Atria.

**Historic preservation** J. Vieira said the Inn is not on the historic register; only one piece of the building dates to the 1700s. J. Suso said the rest of the complex dates from the 1950s and later.

J. Vieira asked J. Suso what the BOS expected from the group. J. Suso said attendance on Monday would be welcome, but they'd like the scoring results before then. J. Vieira called for a general discussion.

J. Clancy thought the initial 11,000 SF was too low for our needs. Adding the extra 6400 SF from renovated space is good, but at what cost? Repurposing always costs more than expected. B. Swain noted that the service center renovation ran into new code requirements that drove up costs. J. Suso said J. Bargmann could plan for these; plus, almost everything in his "phase 1" is 20 years old or less.

R. Leary spoke from a long term planning perspective. The town has many needs; the town should also have a plan. Build things to accommodate expansion. Prioritize, and put dates on items wanted. Plan, for example, to take the high school site, make a senior center and rec center there, then take Gus Canty and make it an archive and 911 center. Otherwise, each item is done piecemeal, as with the affordable housing situation. R. Leary replied that a plan would prevent a surprise issue from derailing a project and sending everyone back to reinvent the wheel (as the athletic field estimate did in this case).

J. Vieira felt the group was handicapped by not having as much information from Joel as it did for the other sites. D. Bowen asked what would follow the "Phase 1" referred to in the handout. J. Suso said it's unknown. The BOS and town manager would decide. Joel's report will be at 8 p.m. on Monday after the executive session, and he should have a Phase 1 cost estimate by then. J. Suso couldn't predict if BOS would make a decision Monday. If not, a special meeting might be called before election day.

J. Vieira said he would email the BOS tomorrow to report the scoring results, and to express that the group feels constrained by lack of information and the tight timeline, and so unable to make a strong recommendation. For now, the group won't plan to meet again.

There being no public comment, J. Vieira adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Meg Costello  
Recording Secretary