

Needham Council on Aging Board Meeting

October 13, 2022

Present: Colleen Schaller, Chair; Helen Gregory, Penny Grossman, Sandra Prinn, Lianne Relich, Ed Cosgrove, Carol de Lemos, Kate Robey, Kathy Whitney, Sue Mullaney, Dan Goldberg, Ted Prorok, VFW representative

COA: Latanya Steele, Director

Health and Human Services Director: Timothy Muir McDonald

BD & CD: Hank Haff

Consultant for CATH: Rachel Parsons, RA Leed AP associate Bargman, Hendrie & Archetype Inc.

Guests: Carol Ditmor, Anne Brain, and Beverly Pavasaris, Friends of the Cath

Other Guest: Ann Cosgrove

1. Meeting called to order by Ms. Schaller, Board Chair at 5:02 pm combination of in person and on Zoom

2. Nominating Committee

Ms. DeLemos reported that the group had nominated Ms. Colleen Schaller as Chair for another term and Ms. Penny Grossman as Vice Chair.

Ms. Delemos made a motion to re-elect Ms. Schaller as Chair. Mr. Prorok seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Ms. Delemos made a second motion to elect Ms. Grossman as vice chair. Ms. Mullaney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

3. CATH Space Study Discussion

Mr. Haff introduced Ms. Young. Ms. Rachel Young noted she wants to use the meeting as a chance to receive input on the various ideas that her firm has designed as a part of the feasibility study. She noted there is a parallel study taking place on revamping the kitchen area. Ms. Young is open to suggestions. She presented a preliminary report that had already been shared with Mr. McDonald and Ms. Steele.

She noted the 2020 study used 2019 data. Ms. Young noted this is a reiterate process.

She noted that several needs are at the top of the list. These include:

- Expanding the fitness center
- Need for increased office space
- The roof deck is underutilized
- Computer lab underutilized
- Kitchen needs to be commercial especially if eventually the Traveling Meals program needs to be moved in house (which may be likely as the BEI Deaconess Needham hospital expands

and their meal preparation space decreases.) The need to increase space in other areas impacts on the separate kitchen expansion/study plan

- The opportunity for a multi-use café/lounge area-this could include café seating and a grab and go window similar to the Falmouth, MA senior center redesign.
- Reorganization of storage space
- Hybrid learning programming capabilities where the presenter or attendees are virtual
- Right sizing the car park which is currently at capacity
- Swapping the game room with the fitness room.
- The possibility of moving the fitness room to the basement.
- Making the roof deck a series of rooms or zones which fits in with the FRA zoning regulations. This could include walls and plantings to screen noise and provide a sense of place, soft furnishings, a moveable awning to provide shade over approximately one half of the deck which could be over the seating area. Also, a separate space for shuffleboard/pool table/ping pong area and a firepit.
- Office space expansion. This could involve moving offices to the first floor and programming to the second floor, making the current Veteran's office for 1 staff member into two while remaining mindful that the social service staff needs private offices for client meetings. Mr. McDonald noted that when the building came online in 2013 there was only one social service staff person, so the staff have grown to meet many social service needs but while programming has increased dramatically.
- Expanding the back parking lot with a substantial new entrance to accommodate handicapped patrons.

A long and varied Board discussion occurred:

This included options for “getting back” some of the underused MBTA parking post-pandemic.

The need for a ballet bar and more floor space in the fitness area as well as new flooring if the game room is switched with the fitness room. The floor space is needed to remove tripping hazards and to accommodate increased use with the new balance machine. The Board also noted they are happy to be one of the few senior centers with licensed fitness trainers on site.

Maintenance of the roof deck greenery and including seating and soft furnishings that can withstand winter weather.

The need to maintain the Gift Shop in the CATH as it provides an important source of programming funding.

The board feels natural light and easy access is important in the fitness room and wants to keep it on the first floor.

Plant and furnishing maintenance on the roof deck are serious issues with both the custodian and staff fully occupied elsewhere in the building.

Mr. McDonald noted that the next steps could include incremental changes over time to fit in with budget plans. He noted the Town's Capital plans are always several years out.

Next Steps for Ms. Young's firm

- Focus groups with seniors October 18 and 20th
- Reach out to MBTA with parking questions
- Meetings with Ms. Steele and her staff
- Review My Senior Center and transportation data
- Identify preferred options with each user group
- Review roof deck options with acoustic and structural consultants
- Estimate costs associated with preferred options

4. Aging Services Division Report Postponed until November.

5. Chairperson's Report Ms. Schaller

a. Approval of June 9, 2022, Minutes

Mr. Goldberg made a motion to approve the June 9 Minutes. Ms. Grossman seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

September 8, 2022, Minutes vote postponed until November.

6. Old Business

Planning Board Meeting - Ms. Schaller and Mr. Cosgrove attended the last meeting on behalf of the Board. Colleen noted they are meeting again on the 18th. The COA Board has no idea how they are leaning re: voting on the 100 West Street/former Avery site project but the vote is first on their agenda.

The Board briefly discussed the project.

The Board agreed they wished to write a letter concerning the project. **Mr. Goldberg made a motion for Ms. Schaller, Board Chair to write a letter noting the Council on Aging Board is opposed to granting a special permit for the 100 West Street project without the inclusion of independent living at that site as approved by Town meeting. Mr. Cosgrove seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Schaller will send the letter prior to the October 18th meeting.**

7. New Business

Ms. Schaller noted that volunteers are still needed to deliver the Springwell meals from the CATH.

Ms. Schaller noted that the Needham Exchange Club wants to use the CATH to pack 125 lunches for the Veterans Association of Boston serving one of their homeless shelters. She noted that

other members are providing small home repairs to Needham seniors in their homes. The Exchange Club will have a small party for the volunteers including beer and wine after the homeless shelter lunchtime meal event. Mr. Cosgrove made a motion to approve the one-day rental of the CATH for purposes of the lunch packing volunteer event. Ms. Robey seconded. The vote was unanimous to allow the 1-day rental by voice vote. Mr. McDonald noted he will process the necessary paperwork for the license to be approved.

8. Ms. Helen Gregory, Housing Subcommittee Report

Ms. Gregory provided an update. The Housing group reviewed its draft recommendation on September 29th. On October 11th, the group presented the plan to the Select Board. The response was positive, and the group hopes for an implementation commitment. Their next meeting is October 27th followed by a community wide meeting for input on November 16th. The Committee will wrap up its work on December 8th.

9. Mr. Ted Prorok, VFW Representative Report

Mr. Prorok noted that Nancy Blanchard, the 5 town Veterans Representative has recently resigned.

Mr. McDonald noted it was a loss to the Town and he is working on a replacement. He noted it was a challenge with the Director deployed and the Deputy Director's resignation.

Mr. Prorok also noted that the singalong and Veterans breakfast in the November 2021 Compass was missing in the online November 2022 version. Ms. Schaller noted she will check with Ms. Kelley on the status of November veterans' events.

10. Ms. Schaller requested a Motion to Adjourn

Ms. Gregory made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Robey seconded this motion. The board unanimously adjourned at 6:29 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Faith Crisley

Recording Secretary