

**Town Of Sherman**  
**Board of Selectman Special Meeting**  
**Thursday, May 12, 2022 at 7 pm**  
**Mallory Town Hall**

**Member's Present:** First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Bob Ostrosky, and Selectman Joel Bruzinski via telephone call.

**Member's Absent:** None

**Audience & Invited:** Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, members of the Senior Center Committee, and residents from the community.

**Clerk:** Margaret Beatty

First Selectman Don Lowe called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was called to discuss the acquisition of Alice Schneckenburger house on Route 37 Center as a potential home for the new proposed/adapted Senior Center. The meeting was treated as an open forum to allow for healthy discussion and varying opinions.

The most pressing question addressing the acquisition of the property was what the costs associated with adapting the building to make it code compliant and accommodating for seniors. First Selectman Don Lowe had met with a reputable local contractor, Joe Beatty of Beatty Builders, to discuss the potential of the project and possible costs, as well as an ADA specialist. In the contractor's opinion, he said the project is very doable for a reasonable cost.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky raised concern and did not believe it was a financially sound decision to purchase an old building. He worries that the costs could balloon once walls are opened whereas a new building can be made into whatever the needs are of the seniors.

Fire Marshal Dave Lathrop commented that a full set of working drawings needs to be submitted to the Building Department and Fire Marshal's office to ensure that the building has been brought to code. He has concern that with the age of the building unplanned issues can arise such as asbestos remediation.

First Selectman Don Lowe noted that there are some hindrances to the property, one in particular is the site line entering/exiting the property. He spoke with Tim Beatty of Beatty Builders, after speaking with a representative from DOT about moving the driveway, Tim Beatty estimated the new driveway with parking lot would run about \$100,000. First Selectman Don Lowe is confident that the DOT would grant an acceptance to move the driveway.

Ray Kelly believes in preserving the Town and expressed approval for considering the Schneckenburger home.

Business Manager Liz LaVia noted whether the contractor factored in the costs of a sprinkler system during his walk through.

Ed Hayes commented that the conversation has centered around what needs to get done with the property but noted that the same questions need to be asked for the proposed new build. He added that each location poses its own unique complications.

Rick Hudson commented that the project needs to be approached in stages. He added that the building would need to be properly examined in order to adequately decide if the square footage would address the current needs of attendees.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky commented that if the project was broken down into stages the potential of the building may never be realized. He also implied that the public's interest in financing subsequent projects is overestimated. He explained the potential for financial hardship especially since the country is dealing with exorbitant inflation. He finished by stating that the voters might prefer a lumpsum project as opposed to a drawn-out expenditure.

Selectman Joel Bruzinski agreed that the property provides a fairytale like ambiance. He echoed the same concerns as Selectman Bob Ostrosky over the unforeseen problems. He reminded that when discussing such a potential acquisition/project the Town needs to keep in mind the voter's appetite for financing the unforeseen. Most importantly, he wanted to know what the building does for them. Does the proposed Schneckenger home provide more/better amenities than what is currently the Senior Center or the proposed new build. Is it better or enough?

Carol Sperling, Senior Center workshop group member, commented that aesthetics is very important when deciding what makes a good senior center. She believes that the right environment would bring more seniors out.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky distinguished the importance of being able to provide all the information to the public as well as answering any questions that the voters present. Transparency is key when confronting the public.

Ray Kelly noted that the Schneckenger home could provide much need space for a Town Hall expansion. The home provides so many options.

Treasurer Eric Holub deduced that people are enamored with the property. He also brought up the question as to why other Town properties were discounted from the conversation. He wondered why this property was deemed suitable over others.

First Selectman Don Lowe replied that other properties were considered but that there were many reasons as to why other Town properties were discounted. He noted that the Schneckenger property would be Town property that could be fashioned into Town space.

The Historic District Commission will need to be brought in on the project if in fact the Town decides to acquire the building.

A private third party has come forward to be the bridge purchaser between the Town and the Schneckenger agent and hold the note on behalf of the Town. The bridge will cover the purchase and hold onto the property, if the Town decides to not move forward with the property the bridge will sell the house and forward any profit from the sell back to the Schneckenger family. The Board will follow up with the Town attorney to move forward with the proper procedural action.

Ed Hayes commented that if the Town decides to move forward with the property all aspects of the project need to be budgeted, including furniture and other miscellaneous expenditures. The numbers need to be all encompassing so that voters can envision the big picture.

The Board decided that more discussion is needed. The Senior Center Workshop Committee should gather for a meeting to discuss what needs are a priority and if the house fits the priorities.

First Selectman Don Lowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm.

**Motioned by:** First Selectman Don Lowe

**Seconded by:** Selectman Bob Ostrosky      **All in Favor:** Unanimous

Notes respectfully submitted on May 19,2022 by Margaret Beatty.