



Town of Sherman
Commission on Aging
Monthly Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 20, 2022

Members Present: Lynda Lee Arnold (Chairman), Janet Wey (Vice Chairman).
Commissioners: Dr. Juan Garcia, Ed Hayes, Rick Hudson, Sheila McMahon, Carol Sperling, Art Von Plachecki

Members Absent: Suzette Berger (Senior Center), Lynne Gomez (Social Services), Jeanne McRoberts

Also Present: Don Lowe – First Selectman

Clerk: Christine Aruza

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM by Chairman L. Arnold.

Motion made by: J. Wey moved to approve the minutes

Seconded by: R. Hudson

Vote For: Unanimous

J. Wey advised the commission would like more info from S. Berger on the Alzheimer's walk. L. Arnold to send an email and obtain for the next meeting.

Ongoing Business:

Working Group Update:

D. Lowe provided an update about the status of the Senior Center project. He advised the working group will have a workshop meeting this Wednesday night to go over specific details. Subsequently on Thursday, the Board of Selectman at their

meeting will try to make a decision on whether or not to move forward with the Schneckenburger house. The Commission on Aging has toured the Schneckenburger house. D. Lowe also conducted another extensive walk-through of the house with Joe Beatty who had further ideas on how to adapt the space to meet the Senior Center's needs. J. Beatty remains positive about the suitability of the site. He advised Selectman Bob Ostrosky has also toured the house and had a positive sentiment. He concluded his update sharing that a few residents have raised concerns about the project in light of the state of the economy.

Per D. Lowe the commission's working group is in favor of the house. He then opened the forum to inquire what the other commissioners felt about the house as an option for the Senior Center. S. McMahon stated she would prefer to start out with keeping the goal of what is needed in mind and not how to change a location to work into those requirements. She raised concerns about ongoing maintenance due to the house's age as well as potential traffic dangers. She does remain open to further evaluating the option.

While not present at this meeting, the group shared that J. McRoberts is also not entirely in favor of this site. J. Wey expressed that she loves the house and location. She is however conflicted. She is concerned that it would be Pandora's Box in terms of maintenance, potentially not being able to satisfy the center's requirements and the ability to meet any challenges with potential Historic District compliance. She is not against the option but is not 100% sold on it either.

A. Von Plachecki stated he could opt for either alternative. He wasn't sure if the town's residents would have a concern about a new building and it not being in line with Sherman's historic, New England aesthetic. He referenced the recent Planning and Zoning Commission survey which included questions regarding the Senior Center.

R. Hudson then spoke to address the concerns raised by S. McMahon and J. Wey. He noted they are valid and he shares the same concerns but believes they are not insurmountable. He recommended the commission continue to move forward to

explore the possibility of pursuing the Schneckenburger house as an option. He stressed that he believes the decision to rule out the property should not be the commission's decision alone and should have public input.

E. Hayes advised that from his perspective either site will have ongoing maintenance needs. This issue should be taken into consideration at the beginning of either a new building project or assuming a project with an older site. His larger concern is the line-of-sight issue which must be rectified. He stressed that before going to a town referendum a value engineering study should be conducted and all foreseen questions addressed.

D. Lowe added his remarks to the point E. Hayes made about maintenance. He agreed that a new build can present its own challenges in terms of unforeseen issues. In addition, by all professional estimations even if unforeseen challenges arise through selection and modification of the Schneckenburger house it would be significantly less expensive than a new build.

J. Garcia was asked for his opinion about the Schneckenburger house as he is quite familiar with it. He believes that the house would be more cost effective than new construction despite ongoing maintenance costs.

C. Sperling acknowledged potential public concern about the state of the economy and proceeding with the cost of a new senior center irrespective of site type and location. She emphasized that a new senior center would be beneficial for the seniors in light of recent health dangers due to COVID. Either site location would afford an outdoor patio and the possibility to install a better ventilation system. She inquired if COVID pandemic relief funds could be utilized towards this project to ease project cost concerns. D. Lowe advised that should it be necessary it is a potential option and would be subject to town vote.

L. Arnold inquired about the timeline in terms of when the Commission on Aging would need to give its decision on the Schneckenburger house. D. Lowe discussed

what steps the Board of Selectman will take next and thereafter what a potential timeline could include.

Motion made by: A. Von Plachecki made a motion for the commission to vote on giving their consent that the town move forward with pursuing the Schneckenburger house as an additional option.

Seconded by: R. Hudson

Vote for: Not unanimous (J. Wey abstained)

New Business:

Per L. Arnold there is money left in the budget for the remainder of this fiscal year. The commission's discussion then shifted on how to best utilize the funds. Ideas that were floated included purchasing blood pressure cuffs for the center should the monthly health service that performs these checks cease.

J. Wey will speak with S. Berger to see if she has specific needs that could be satisfied with remaining budget. Past expenditures of the Senior Center included the traffic warning sign in front of the center, hearing devices, etc.

Motion made by: A. Von Plachecki made a motion for J. Wey to speak with S. Berger and obtain a list to share with the group for a vote.

Seconded by: E. Hayes

Vote for: Unanimous

Adjournment:

R. Hudson moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

C. Sperling seconded the motion.

Vote for: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Aruza
Next meeting: Monday, July 18, 2022, 4:00PM at Mallory Town Hall