TOWN OF TRUMBULL
CONNECTICUT

Town Hall
5866 Main Street
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611

Senior/Community Center and Library Study Building Committee
Tuesday, May 24, 2016
7:00 pm
Long Hill Conference Room, Trumbull Town Hall

Present: Co-Chairmen Joseph Pifko and Daniel Marconi; Committee Members Jeannine Stauder, Richard Seaman, Dawn Cantafio (entered at 7:18 pm), Lori Hayes-O'Brien, Joseph Costa

Also Present: Lynn Arnow, Chief of Staff, Kevin Bova, Purchasing Director and Rina Bakalar, Economic Director

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Mr. Pifko followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Past Minutes
Mr. Marconi moved to approve the minutes of May 16, 2016 as written. Seconded by Mr. Seaman. Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien noted two changes:

1. Second page – Review of Sites – should be review of Glastonbury and Westport on the discussion items.
2. Second page – Town Council meeting is June 6 not June 10.

Motion made by Mr. Seaman to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Marconi and approved unanimously.

Public Comment
Jonathan Green, 23 Topaz Lane – realizes the committee is doing outreach to get information. It bothers him when the First Selectman states that we need a new Senior Center because 400 people go somewhere else. That is a statement of a problem not a justification of a solution. The justification for the solution is why. There may be many different reasons why they attend other centers instead of Trumbull. Until you know the answer to those questions, the statement about the 400 people is meaningless. He hoped the committee members with business backgrounds would take a further look before moving forward with the expenditure.

Cindy Katske, 129 Meadowview Drive – formally requested that the Committee hold several hearings to present the program created with the spaces that would comprise the new facility and get public feedback. This would help to improve the chances of a successful outcome. Getting public input before the design process begins would further the program with what the public is looking for. She asked the committee to review the community survey question answers. These answers were eliminated from the results and not discussed or considered. Many people in Trumbull want a community center. The POCD listed it as the #1 town priority and many survey respondents

stated they wanted it. However, only 426 people answered the survey. She discussed the responses noting some people wanted a pool, basketball, volleyball courts, etc. She feels it is a mistake to not even talk about a pool especially given the continuing problems with the Hillcrest pool. She stated she was confused about the site visits to Westport and Glastonbury. Were they official visits by the Committee, are they going to change the elements of the facility, will more facilities be visited at this time?

Roy Molgard, 8 Limerick Road – both he and his wife use the Senior Center and they have had an opportunity to speak with the seniors. 95% do not want the Probate Court at the Center and they don't want a new Senior Center. He has been to other centers but felt Trumbull has the best one. The other centers are newer but they pay for their programs. Trumbull does not charge for programs. The 400 number is "a lot of baloney". Several people belong to other centers because of the programs but the Senior Commission approved additional classes. The 400 is probably more like 100 when analyzed. Seniors pay a lot of taxes in the town and we don't get much for it. One thing Trumbull has is a Senior Center that the seniors like. Now the First Selectman is trying to take that away from the seniors. They don't want him taking it away from the seniors and they don't want a new one.

Vanessa Eiseman, 11 Canterbury Lane -- noted there is still confusion about the sites and hoped it could be clarified at the meeting. She also noted there is a significant part of the population that wants the site off of parks and off of open land.

Susan LaFrance, 35 Woosley Avenue – read an email to Mr. Pifko. She asked that a comprehensive town-wide survey be sent to all residents of Trumbull for further input and response if they are for or against a new building that is estimated to be $8 million and will be paid solely by Trumbull residents. Residents have been discussing many options over the past several months – a senior center, a community center, a senior/community center, no building if necessary or renovation of the Senior Center. She asked for clarification as to what the above options mean. In the end, the tax payers will have to pay for whatever is decided whether one has access to the building or not. Please consider a survey for all the town residents.

Michael Ganino – not currently a resident of Trumbull but will be moving to 3 Canterbury Lane soon. He stated he was here to gather information on the Senior Center, in particular the land that abuts his property being considered as a site for the facility.

Mr. Pifko noted that there are co-chairs and that Mrs. LaFrance's email was shared with the other Committee members. He noted the committee has co-chairs from each side of the aisle. Both emails are listed on the website for the committee.

Old Business

In consideration of the public at the meeting, Mr. Pifko moved the discussion of the potential sites before the Executive Session. Motion made by Mr. Marconi, seconded by Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien to take this topic out of order. Approved unanimously.

Mr. Pifko noted the Committee has exhausted a lot of sites and looked at a lot of sites. One discussed favorably was the Long Hill site.

Mrs. Cantafio entered the meeting at 7:18 pm.

The plan is to interview the four finalists and give them a couple of options to work with. These may not be the only options but they are the most favorable options unless something else comes up such as private property or another site the Committee has not thought of. Long Hill is already established and has a 20,000 sq. ft. building on it currently. It has the same footprint as the idea of the community center being discussed. Property is flat. If this property is approved by the Committee as one of the sites to be given to the architectural firms, the firms can discuss renovating the building, saving part and rebuilding the rest new or scraping the building and starting new.

Mr. Marconi noted the architectural firms contacted have a variety of skill sets for senior centers and other facilities but they all do reconstruction and renovation. We would ask them for what thoughts they may have so we can evaluate the sites.

The second site, also a town-owned site, is the Wagner Tree Farm on Route 111. This is 2.6 acres with wetlands on the property. This would be low impact to neighborhoods. Stop light at Spring Hill Road may need to be modified or moved depending on a traffic study. Wal-Mart would be up the street in Monroe.

Mr. Pifko asked Rina Bakalar, the new Director of Economic Development, to address the group about some of the town properties she has looked at. Ms. Bakalar noted that projects such as this are not easy to site in a community that is 98% developed or easy to come to consensus around but it doesn't get cheaper or easier. She noted she respects everyone's opinions and is listening very carefully. She noted this was a high priority from the POCD which was developed with community input. With regard to sites, there are two that have surfaced as potential but no decision has been made on the site. Mrs. Arnow and Ms. Bakalar will be developing a table that talks about the sites that have been ruled out, sites still viable, and potential areas to be explored further. Pros, cons, what is unknown and costs involved will be a part also. The sensitivities of the Committee and the public are being listened to. Everything will be taken into consideration. They are looking through all town-owned properties in case something has not been considered that is potentially viable. If members of the community come forward with options, they will be explored also.

Mr. Pifko opened discussion on the two sites. Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien questioned if the Nature Center would need to be relocated? This is a possibility but a plan to keep the Center could be incorporated into the design. This is not centrally located which raises some red flags and Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien is concerned about the wetlands also. Mr. Pifko noted the wetlands on the property will not be a problem building a 20,000 sq. ft. facility. Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien also noted that with the Long Hill site, it would require relocation and it has not been considered a usable spot by the Committee but this would be for the architects to decide.

Mr. Pifko noted Middlebrooks Park has a problem because it is a winding, down-hill road that has a school, day care center and EMS all on the same corner. This is a problem with safety and traffic concerns. This would add more traffic on a non-main road. There has been talk about the younger residents needing a place to go. This is an ideal situation where we can turn this into not a senior center that is also open to the community but a community center that is open to everyone including seniors and change the mindset. However, this would cause problems in a residential area.

Mrs. Cantafio noted the 2.6 acres would not be suitable tor expansion and includes wetlands. The Long Hill property would require the relocation of a field, rebuilding and relocating.

Mr. Costa noted the accuracy of the maps is suspect because it is not a survey. Until everything is mapped accurately it is hard to know how much area we will have or the quality of the wetlands. Having a flat area is

favorable. There are challenges for each site. We will not know exactly what we have until the consultant conducts a feasibility study.

Mr. Pifko noted the Committee does not decide if a community center is built. The Committee's task is to select a site, come up with a design and present it to the Town Council with a cost. The Town Council will decide what is done. Town Council has an item on their June 6 agenda to change the name.

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien noted there is a petition going around the town that we should not ignore if they are asking us to look at this deeper. It is important for the Committee to get a better sense of what that looks like and discuss it at a later date. It is important the public feels they have a say but the feeling is that the project is moving at a faster speed than people want. Mrs. Stauder noted the public was given surveys to complete which they chose not to do; this current survey is unofficial including the one in the newspaper. Perhaps this can be on the agenda for the next time.

Ms. Bakalar suggested that part of the interviews with the architects could be putting a question or two in about their qualifications or experience refining the scope of the program through a process. They may meet with staff, have a focus group, or review the surveys and the POCD. They may have expertise to refine the process to help us. It would be a very professional process. Mrs. Arnow noted they may look at sites and come up with information and possibilities for the project which would give us additional options on the table. People seem to want input now even though they were given the opportunity in the past.

Additional discussion was held regarding the survey and the task of the Committee. The town has reacted to the POCD support of a community center and the Committee research. They do not want the town to be divided as decisions are made. The surveys completed have great feedback and it was felt that additional surveys would not change the information received. Perhaps a different way to find out information could be considered.

Mr. Pifko noted the architectural firms will not only bring the plans back to the Committee but will present it to the town in an open hearing. This would be a preview of what it would look like. A public hearing would be beneficial to visualize the building. If the right site is picked, not everything would have to be built at first. Town Council still makes the final decision.

Ann Marie Evangelista, Town Council -- in asking for the public's opinion, 400 people does not a town's opinion make. You are not doing us a favor by offering us an opinion. She saw the survey but thought it was for seniors so she didn't fill it out. No one made a big deal about it and she was shocked that it is a big deal to ask the community for their input. As a Town Council member she stated she was beside herself that the committee is not considering asking the community for public input. She is disgusted and sad and sad that no one is listening to Mr. Molgard. She doesn't understand the rush and why it is bad to ask the town for their opinion. Mr. Marconi asked what type of questions could be asked in a survey that would change the decision of the size of the building. Ms. Evangelista stated all the people didn't get to give input. It has been suggested a flyer be put into each resident's tax bill which would be one survey per household. She felt there was a very, not Dawn or Lori, pompous and condescending attitude. It is a shame because she is here as a Town Council member. To say we are not going to ask you your opinion, this is not what I signed up for; not what I wanted to represent the people for. You need to give Trumbull a voice. Do not make the same mistake twice. Please slow down. Please do not talk down to the residents.

Mrs. Stauder recommended proceeding as planned to have the two sites presented to the architectural firms. Motion was made by Mr. Marconi, seconded by Mrs. Stauder to move forward with the two sites. Vote carried unanimously except for Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien who abstained due to her concerns. Motion passed.

Mr. Costa reviewed how the firms would be reviewed. He noted the short list of firms would be invited in for an interview where the Committee would prepare questions and use them as a score sheet. Each member would score the firms. This gives an opportunity to meet the teams and ask questions about how they would handle the project. At the end, the favored team would be picked and they would be invited to provide fees, expenses, feasibility study and then proceed with the project if it is funded.

Mrs. Arnow discussed the process followed so far with regard to qualifications. The committee has review all of the proposals and came up with a short list and those firms will be invited for an interview. Questions need to be developed for the interviews. This will allow the Committee to decide who is the best and begin to discuss negotiations and pricing and moving forward. Mr. Costa noted it is important not to just look at the projects these firms have worked on but we need a sense of how they interact with the town, each other and any issues they may face as this project moves forward. Mr. Pifko noted that at this point, no costs are being requested so that the decisions are made on qualifications only. Mr. Bova noted a scoring matrix will be developed and discussed the process of interviewing. Legal advisors recommended this discussion be conducted in Executive Session.

Mr. Pifko stated, before the Committee goes into Executive Session, that a lot has been said at the meeting. He does not perceive the Committee as being arrogant and not concerned with public comment. When people make public comment at any meeting, it is a public comment, it is not public discussion. We do not engage in discussion at the meeting for a reason. We are not being arrogant, we are not ignoring comments, we are listening and take note of the responses. Responses have been heard and many plans have been changed because of public comment. A good example is Middlebrooks. In talking about that, there were some very good points. We were not being arrogant in not responding to the public. The Committee has to keep moving forward, they have been working on this for a while. The Committee has done a lot of work as volunteers. We are in the phase where we are going to speak with architects, come up with some designs, possible sites and then come back to the public for input. It is not fair to scrap the Committee and start all over again. The Committee will certainly listen to the public.

Executive Session

Motion was made by Mrs. Stauder to move into Executive Session to discuss the RFP. Seconded by Mr. Marconi and approved unanimously. All committee members were present. Also included were Mrs. Arnow, Mr. Bova and Ms. Bakalar. Motion was made by Mr. Pifko to exit Executive Session at 9:01 pm. Seconded by Mr. Seaman and approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be June 23, 2016 at 4:00 pm. The June 9, 2016 meeting will be cancelled.

Adjournment

There being no further business, motion was made by Mr. Costa to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 pm. Seconded by Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Crandall
Clerk

These minutes are considered a draft until approved at the next meeting of the Senior/Community Center Library Study Building Committee.