

MEETING MINUTES
Community Facilities Building Committee
Aquatics Facilities Building Committee
Joint Meeting
June 8, 2022

In Attendance:

Community Facilities Building Committee
Lori Hayes-O'Brien, Chair
Dawn Cantafio, Vice Chair
Mike Buswell
Ted Chase
Dean Fabrizio
Ron Foligno
Dave Galla
Tony Silber
Gail Ritacco

Aquatics Facilities Building Committee
Jason Marsh, Chair
Dennis Mucci
Jay Orenstein

Not in Attendance:
Mark Block
Chris DeCruze
April Lang
Mary Markham
Brian Moore

Also in attendance:

Vicki Tesoro, First Selectman

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comments:

Mrs. Tesoro read a statement thanking the committee members for their service. She discussed the current economic status and the impact on a potential joint project. She also recognized the long-standing needs of the Senior Center and Aquatics facility and recommended that the committees again revert to separate projects. Mrs. Tesoro opined that the Senior/Community Center is closer to being "shovel-ready" and stated that perhaps the immediate focus should be on that project. She also asked for the Aquatics committee to consider doing more investigation in to the possibility of a facility being placed on school grounds. The town will continue to look for grants and other monies to offset the costs of these projects.

Cindy Penkoff, 101 Columbine Drive, agreed with many of the statements made by Mrs. Tesoro. She is opposed to the possible Hardy Lane location for the Senior/Community Center. She cited the current economy, costs of the projects and needs of the schools as reasons for her opposition to the project.

Janet Kramka, 223 Church Hill Road, is opposed to the Hardy Lane location. She quoted from past newspaper articles that referenced future use of that site when it was purchased, expressed concerns about the impact on the Pequonock River Trail and traffic issues on Church Hill Road.

Richard White, 169 Church Hill Road, expressed concerns with the scoring method used for site evaluations. He felt they were subjective and should be revisited. He also thought the committee should reconsider looking at some of the town parks as possible sites.

Jeff Pace, 213 Church Hill Road, opposes the Hardy Lane site and referenced traffic concerns and the impact on wildlife.

Elizabeth White, 169 Church Hill Road, read a statement expressing her opposition to any project being located at Hardy Lane citing preservation of the Pequonock Valley watershed, impact on wildlife, traffic concerns and costs. She urged the committees to consider building new facilities where both the pool and senior center are currently located.

Christine El Ers, 4955 Madison Avenue, voiced her support for the need of an Aquatics Facility in town.

Barbara and John Drummond, 183 Church Hill Road, are opposed to the Hardy Lane location citing traffic concerns and wetland issues. Mr. Drummond recommended that the committee conduct soil studies before considering the site. Mrs. Drummond thanked the committee members for their service.

Paul Sullivan, 49 Bonita Avenue, expressed concerns about the cost of the projects.

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien closed public comment at 7:29pm.

MOTION to accept minutes of 4/13/22 made by Mrs. Cantafio, seconded by Mr. Foligno. Motion approved by the Community Facilities Building Committee with two abstentions by Mr. Chase and Mrs. Ritacco. The Aquatics Facilities Building Committee did not have a quorum therefore did not vote.

Discussion of the Project:

Mr. Marsh offered his comments in response to Mrs. Tesoro's statement. He expressed disappointment but understood the reasoning behind separating the projects at this time. He shared his concerns about the potential impact this has on the swimming community and the building of an aquatics facility. He looks forward to having conversations with the BOE soon regarding possible sites.

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien echoed Mr. Marsh's comments. She talked about how long the building of a Senior Center and Community Center has been discussed and hopes her committee can move forward from where they were at prior to the pandemic. She restated that there is no perfect time and no perfect place. She expressed support for both projects.

Mr. Chase clarified that, based on the Town Council's resolution, we are still two separate committees and that our role is to look at all of our options and present a recommendation for the Town Council to vote on.

Mr. Silber agreed with Mrs. Tesoro's suggestion that a pool should be located on school grounds.

Mrs. Ritacco also supported a school-based pool and was encouraged about the possible pursuit of other funds. She thanked those who made public comments and hoped that the division of the projects would mitigate some of their concerns.

Mr. Foligno stated that what we are discussing is location, money and final approval. He also referenced the Veteran's Center and its minimal impact on town taxpayers.

Mr. Mucci agreed with Mr. Marsh's comments and thanked the committee members and those making public comments. He stated that his committee will have conversations with the BOE and get creative.

Mr. Marsh assured the current competitive swimmers that the town is still working diligently to make sure that they have somewhere to swim. He thanked Mr. Estrada for helping to bridge the gap for those teams.

Next Steps:

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien discussed where the Community Facilities Building Committee was at prior to looking at a joint committee. The components of the past plans are mostly the same with the addition of a small Recreation Department office and a larger gym. She stated that a vote might be needed to counteract a previous vote stating that the two committees would work together.

MOTION to "break up" was made by Mr. Buswell, seconded by Mr. Foligno. Motion approved unanimously.

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien talked about what directives the architects may need from the committee. Discussion of what plans were already created and whether we would still be considering other locations ensued. She also thanked the public for their comments and reassured them that soil testing and traffic studies would be done at any possible site.

Mr. Orenstein questioned whether the projects would go to a vote by the public in November. Mr. Marsh defined what the requirements are for a project to go to a referendum.

The Community Facilities Building Committee will hold a Special Meeting on Wednesday, June 15th at 7pm. The Aquatics Facilities Building Committee will determine their next meeting after conversations with the BOE.

New Business:

MOTION to approve QA&M invoice #14225 in the amount of \$4,124.02 made by Mrs. Cantafio, seconded by Mr. Galla. Motion approved unanimously.

MOTION to approve QA&M invoice #14323 in the amount of \$6,617.50 made by Mrs. Cantafio, seconded by Mr. Foligno. Motion approved unanimously.

MOTION to adjourn made by Mrs. Cantafio, seconded by Mr. Chase. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Submitted by Lori Hayes-O'Brien