

Expansion Project Update April 2019

The next Expansion Committee Meeting is scheduled for this Thursday, April 25, 2019 starting at 6 p.m. at the Senior Center, 7 Main Street, Shelburne Falls.

- *On the Agenda is time to hear from the Arms Neighborhood regarding the circulating petitions. Please attend to hear information and to get any questions answered.*

In recent weeks we have received numerous questions regarding potentially locating a new Senior Center next to the Arms building. The following are replies to some of the questions:

1. Shelburne Selectboard approved a site survey of the Town owned land surrounding the former Arms Academy. This is not the start of construction but a survey to assess if the lot would be feasible for a newly constructed building and is consistent with the Buckland Selectboard allowing for a site survey of the Buckland Police Station.
2. No construction will be done or is approved. Many public forums will be scheduled for further public input.
3. Funding, as indicated from the beginning of the project and consistently during the process, will largely come from other sources in addition to town funding.
4. There are no plans to connect to the existing Shelburne Historical Museum. During an initial visit, the museum expressed need for accessibility, so this idea was briefly considered but is not part of any current plans.
5. A warrant article was submitted asking for support for the Shelburne Selectman to consider transferring the public lot (or portion) for use for the Senior Center. This warrant request has been withdrawn and the Selectboard have not placed the proposed article on the warrant.

Questions related to the need for a center, the proposed size, history of the expansion project and other sites considered can be answered by going to the senior center website at:

Townofshelburne.com/p/22/Senior-Center (Select the Expansion Project button)

A BRIEF timeline/overview is listed on the back on this page.

Please know that the Expansion Committee is considering, and respectful of, factors voiced by public feedback regarding location and design of any building. We have always and will continue to seek public input into this very important project.

Thank you,

Cathy Buntin, Senior Center Director

Sylvia Smith, Expansion Committee Chair

Brief Overview of Senior Center Expansion Need and Project

- The Expansion Project began in 2014 with a population study by the University of Massachusetts -Boston detailing the incredible shift in demographics in West County. Our local residents ages 60 and older now exceed 35% of their town's population. Some towns are approaching 50%.
- Realizing the inadequacies of the current senior center to meet the needs of this growing population, a feasibility study was done by Jones Whitsett Architects in 2015. Total space needs, including designated areas for programs and offices, were estimated to be approximately 8,000 square feet. The current Center is 3,620 square feet.
- An Expansion Committee was formed in September of 2017 to find a solution to the current situation to best meet the needs of our residents.
- Extensive research has been done regarding finding a site, determining ownership and funding the project.
- Over 20 sites were reviewed and scored. The four top-scoring sites were explored further. Information was presented at public forums on February 19 and February 25, 2019.
- Results of 90 surveys returned from those forums indicated a clear preference for pursuing the public land surrounding the former Arms Academy as a possible site.
- During the next public forum on March 25, 2019, four possible building locations were presented. In surveys returned that evening, those who expressed a preference, clearly chose the location adjacent to the Arms Academy, where the former Science Building stood. Additional research is being conducted prior to the next public forum.

Results of these studies and research can be found at:

Townofshelburne.com/p/22/Senior-Center. Select the Expansion Project button.

Copies of presentations can be requested at the Senior Center. Videos of the February 25 and March 25 forums can be viewed at FallsCable.com Type Senior Center in the search bar.