

Senior Center Expansion Committee
Site and Design Subcommittee

Minutes of 11/22/19 meeting
Senior Center, 7 Main St. Shelburne Falls

Present: Mike McCusker, Joanne Soroka, Sylvia Smith, Pamela Kelleher, Jeremy Coleman, Donna Liebl, Doug Field.

Absent: Norman Beebe, Matt Marchese, Cathy Buntin, Diane Poland, Marguerite Sheehan

Guests: Mark VanDale, Lynne Kelsey, Jackie Walsh

Meeting was called to order by Mike McCusker, chair, at 9:38 a.m.

Minutes of the Oct. 25, 2019 meeting were not available and will on the next agenda.

Public comment:

Jackie Walsh noted (and was pleased) that when she did the 2 site surveys, her results were consistent.

Lynne Kelsey noted disappointment that the minutes of Oct. 25 were not available today and that she received a letter from the Attorney General's office indicating that she has until Jan. 2, 2020 to respond regarding the committee's response to her complaint.

The following members were affirmed as the newly combined Site and Design Subcommittee: Norman Beebe, Cathy Buntin, Jeremy Coleman, Doug Field, Pamela Kelleher, Donna Liebl, Matt Marchese, Mike McCusker, Diane Poland, Marguerite Sheehan, Sylvia Smith, and Joanne Soroka.

The Site Forum update by committee members included attendance of approximately 150 attendees at the forums at Mohawk Trail Regional School, The Senior Center, and Ashfield Town Hall. There was considerable positive feedback about the details and quality of information presented and that it even changed some people's minds. There was acknowledgement of the amount of work that the committee, subcommittees, and others have done. There seems to be consensus that the presentation provided information in a way that does not indicate a committee recommendation or preference, but that the committee is interested in community input. The surveys are very educational – both the site surveys (due Dec. 2) and the program surveys (due Dec. 13).

Mike provided an update on a discussion that he and Sylvia had with Marty Driggs and Jonathan George representing the Masons on items to be considered in the broader discussion between the Site and Design Subcommittee and representatives of the Masons on the proposal from the Masons to use their building for Senior Center expansion. Among items identified to be discussed will be the use of the building by the Masons, the frequency, and required storage space, length of time space would be needed, how a renovation would be handled with respect to building usage and rental considerations and

alternatives. We agreed that we would honor confidentiality within our discussions if requested. Discussion among this foursome is to identify topics for discussion between our larger group and a larger group of Masons in an open meeting.

There was considerable discussion about the process and role of this committee in dialogue with Masons, should the surveys indicate further discussion is warranted. It was noted that we are not “negotiating” or making “offers” as only the entity that owns the Senior Center is able to do that; the ownership has not been finalized at this point. Public discussions between this subcommittee and representatives of the Masons will try to narrow the scope of the proposal to provide greater detail for future public information sessions and to present to the “owner” of The Senior Center preliminary work for their negotiations with the Masons.

Mike noted that an Inspection Report has been done by William Stevens on the building and that it is a public document. An appraisal has also been completed which is not a public document until a negotiation is announced. It may be used for strategy discussions in Executive Sessions of the committee. It was agreed that the Inspection Report would be on the agenda at our next meeting.

Public Comment:

Jackie Walsh noted that at the Ashfield Forum, there were not enough of the long surveys; Doug responded that he put 25 copies at the Town Hall the next morning and that all but about two have been taken. Jackie also noted that she understood public space could be free or rented and wondered about the open space on the second floor and its usage.

Mark VanDale noted there is confusion about what we can and cannot do and indicated anyone can call the Attorney General’s office and speak to the attorney of the day – and it’s free.

Lynne Kelsey presented a formal written request for minutes of the Oct. 25. Joanne will provide the draft minutes to her.

Mark and Lynne commented on the survey results and questioned why the committee wants to separate results from those completed following presentations vs those submitted by the general public. Sylvia indicated the composite results will be reported as well as the subgroups to aid the committee in determining next steps. There is no particular weight being assigned to a subgroup.

Next meetings: Site and Design Subcommittee on Friday, Dec. 13, 2019 at 9:30 a.m. at The Senior Center; Expansion Committee on Thursday, Dec. 5 at 6:00 p.m. at The Senior Center.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jeremy Coleman and seconded by Donna Liebl and approved. Adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Smith, Acting Secretary