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Meeting ID: 885 3615 8322

Passcode: 472975

Phone: +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Community / Senior Center Advisory Committee

Monday, September 27, 2021 @ 6:00 PM

Town Hall - Doc McIntosh Room

Special Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Audience of Citizens
4. Approval of Minutes, September 2, 2021
5. Review and Discussion of Statement of Needs
6. Review Tasks of Committee
7. Discussion of Other Towns and Facilities
 - a. Where to visit
 - b. What to ask
8. Discussion of Grant Research
9. Discussion on Tom Arcari meeting attendance
10. Discussion and Possible Action on proposed meeting dates
11. Adjournment

There was a problem with the sound for the first 38 minutes of the meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://town-berlin-ct-us.zoom.us/j/91260025240?pwd=KzltMUVHVUN5RzdjcGxEZkdMVllBdz09>

Meeting ID: 912 6002 5240

Passcode: 820125

Call in: +19292056099

**Community / Senior Center Advisory Committee
Thursday, September 2, 2021 @6:00 PM
Town Hall - Doc McIntosh Room / Zoom
Special Meeting**

Attendance:

Donna Bovee, Parks & Recreation Commission Chairwoman
David Cyr, Economic Development Commissioner (left at 8:22 p.m.)
Barbara Gombotz, Commission for the Aging Chairwoman
Tim Grady, Board of Finance member
Brenden Luddy, Town Councilor
Mike Urrunaga, Town Councilor

Others present:

Mark Kaczynski, Mayor
Michael Ahern, Public Works Director
Kevin Delaney, Finance Director
Jeff Donofrio, Corporation Counsel (left at 7:23 p.m.)
Arosha Jayawickrema, Town Manager
Jennifer Ochoa, Director of Community, Recreation & Park Services
Kate Wall, Town Clerk

1. Call to Order – Town Clerk Kate Wall

Town Clerk Wall called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Selection of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Town Clerk Wall asked for nominations for Chairperson.

Mr. Cyr nominated Brenden Luddy

Mrs. Gombotz nominated Donna Bovee

There being no further nominations Town Clerk Wall did a roll call vote:

Mrs. Bovee	Donna Bovee
Mr. Cyr	Brenden Luddy
Mrs. Gombotz	Donna Bovee
Mr. Grady	Brenden Luddy
Mr. Luddy	Brenden Luddy
Mr. Urrunaga	Donna Bovee

Vote was three votes for Brenden Luddy and three votes for Donna Bovee

Town Clerk Wall again asked for nominations for Chairperson.

Mr. Cyr nominated Brenden Luddy

Mrs. Gombotz nominated Donna Bovee

There being no further nominations Town Clerk Wall did a roll call vote:

Mrs. Bovee	Donna Bovee
Mr. Cyr	Brenden Luddy
Mrs. Gombotz	Donna Bovee
Mr. Grady	Brenden Luddy
Mr. Luddy	Brenden Luddy
Mr. Urrunaga	Donna Bovee

Vote was three votes for Brenden Luddy and three votes for Donna Bovee

Town Clerk Wall explained that we cannot continue the meeting until a Chairperson has been selected. Ms. Wall asked if either Mr. Luddy or Mrs. Bovee would consider being the Vice-Chairperson. Mrs. Bovee agreed to be considered for the Vice-Chairperson. Town Clerk Wall asked the committee if they were all agreeable to having Mrs. Bovee serve as Vice-Chairperson. All members agreed.

Town Clerk Wall asked for nominations for Chairperson.

Mr. Cyr nominated Brenden Luddy.

There being no further nominations Town Clerk Wall did a roll call vote:

Mrs. Bovee	Brenden Luddy
Mr. Cyr	Brenden Luddy
Mrs. Gombotz	Brenden Luddy
Mr. Grady	Brenden Luddy

Mr. Luddy	Brenden Luddy
Mr. Urrunaga	Brenden Luddy

Vote 6-0

Brenden Luddy was selected as Chairman.

Town Clerk Wall asked for nominations for Vice-Chairperson.

Mrs. Gombotz nominated Donna Bovee,

There being no further nominations Town Clerk Wall did a roll call vote:

Mrs. Bovee	Donna Bovee
Mr. Cyr	Donna Bovee
Mrs. Gombotz	Donna Bovee
Mr. Grady	Donna Bovee
Mr. Luddy	Donna Bovee
Mr. Urrunaga	Donna Bovee

Vote 6-0

Donna Bovee was selected as Vice-Chairman.

3. Audience of Citizens

Sam Lomaglio gave a brief history of the present Community Center located under the Berlin-Peck Memorial Library and expressed the need the community has for a Community Center.

4. Introduction by Chairperson and Review of Tasks

The Committee members discussed ways to inform / involve the public including:

- A table at the 2021 Berlin Fair with Town and QA&M (Architect) staff present;
- A table at the 2021 Berlin Fair (either with Town staff or unstaffed) to distribute general information about the conceptual plan (including size, features, estimated cost) and comment cards for citizens to return with questions / feedback.
- A mailing to all residents with information about the conceptual plan and possible comment cards to be returned.
- Posting of information about the conceptual plan through Facebook or the Town websites and requests for electronic comments from residents.

- Formation of a Town email address to receive comments / questions / suggestions from residents.

Mr. Cyr moved that no outreach be performed at the 2021 Berlin Fair.

Seconded by Mr. Grady.

Discussion regarding possible outreach at the 2021 Berlin Fair included:

- It is too early in the process to effectively educate the public? Some residents have already asked questions regarding construction and operation costs, and there aren't any specific answers yet;
- Should the Advisory Committee investigate construction costs and operating costs for the conceptual design, and also offer the public a "scaled down" option as well as a YMCA partnership option to consider?;
- Should the Advisory Committee perform due diligence site visits to other municipal Community Centers prior to communicating with the public?;
- The 2021 Berlin Fair would be a good opportunity to share the conceptual design with people that may not be on Facebook or visit the Town website;
- The 2021 Berlin Fair could be a good opportunity to ask the public what they would like to see in a Community / Senior Center, particularly those residents who have not participated in the public forums.

Those voting in favor: Mr. Cyr, Mr. Grady, Mr. Luddy

Those voting against: Ms. Bovee, Ms. Gombotz, Mr. Urrunaga

Vote being 3-3. MOTION DEFEATED.

Although the motion not to present at the 2021 Berlin Fair was defeated, the group will not plan on performing any public outreach or sharing information at the upcoming Fair. The group will discuss public outreach at its next meeting, and Mayor Kaczynski suggested that a professional marketing firm be considered to prepare a mailing and could be paid with Grant funds.

5. Comments from Mayor Mark Kaczynski

Mayor Kaczynski thanked the Advisory Committee members for their volunteerism and participation. Town Council and Berlin residents will rely on the findings of the Committee to make educated decisions on the viability / affordability of the different options for a Community / Senior Center.

6. Comments from Jeff Donofrio, Corporation Counsel – distribution of ethic policy

Corporation Counsel Donofrio informed the Committee members that they must remain impartial as the exploratory process unfolds – they can inform the public of options or ask for input but cannot advocate for or against any option. Substantive matters should not be discussed informally, rather they should be addressed in a properly noticed public Advisory Committee meeting. Corporation Counsel Donofrio advised the Committee members that investigative site visits to other Town facilities by only two Committee members would be appropriate and would not constitute a committee meeting. He suggests that the Committee discuss which members will visit which locations in advance. Those members who perform site visits should report back to the Advisory Committee and the public at fully noticed formal meetings.

Corporation Counsel Donofrio suggested that the Advisory Committee reach a consensus on the program, consider alternatives and then recommend an option to Town Council. Once the project is identified and a schematic design completed, a professional cost estimate should be obtained.

7. Comments from Kevin Delaney, Finance Director and Kate Wall, Town Clerk – Referendum timeline

Finance Director Delaney noted that a bond is a legal document – and bond funds may only be spent on what is described in the accompanying ordinance. The Town Charter requires that expenditures over \$5,000,000 require a referendum which would occur in November or April. The bonding process involves Town Council authorizing the Town Manager to work with Bond Counsel to draft an ordinance, consideration by the residents at a Public Hearing, consideration / vote by Town Council at a public meeting, and consideration / vote by Board of Finance in order to move the bond forward. The process could take between several weeks to several months given the public notice, meeting and voting requirements.

8. Comments from Michael Ahern, Public Works Director – Public Building Commission timeline

Director Ahern noted that Public Building Commission is scheduled to meet on Thursday, September 9, 2021 and will inform Architect QA&M of the formation of the Advisory Committee. The Architect was unable to perform public outreach as originally planned in Spring/Summer 2020 due to COVID-19. Director Ahern will confirm whether Advisory Committee involvement with Architect QA&M is included within the “Outreach” section of the vendor’s contract with the Town.

9. **Sub-Committee to establish meeting dates and times** – check on contact information of members

The next meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, September 28, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The Advisory Committee members will discuss setting a long-term meeting schedule at that meeting. The group will consider whether once-monthly meetings seem adequate or whether higher frequency makes more sense early in the process.

The September 28, 2021 meeting agenda will include Matrix review, discuss site visits and possibly discussion with QA&M Architects.

10. Review of Statements of Need

11. Review of Berlin Community and Senior Center Information Matrix

12. Adjournment

Mr. Grady moved to adjourn at 8:41 p.m.

Seconded by Mr. Urrunaga.

Those voting in favor: Ms. Bovee, Ms. Gombotz, Mr. Grady, Mr. Luddy, Mr. Urrunaga.

Vote being: 5-0. MOTION CARRIED.

Submitted by,

Dana Borges

Received on 9/9/2021
at 3:13:39 PM by Town Clerk
Kathryn J Wall

Attachment A

Berlin Community / Senior Center Sub- Committee Tasks

- a. Facilitate and be liaison for town, architect, staff, etc.
- b. Create timeline to have work completed in February/March 2022 for Final Public Forums before referendum
- c. Visit with other towns who have a Community and Senior Center
 - i. Lessons learned
 - ii. Services Offered
 - iii. Any consultants used other than architect
 - iv. Cost & Funding – if grants or other funding sources than property taxes, did the town wait for those to be “final” before final presentation?
 - v. Operations – staffing, training, in-house, outsource, including “Y” option
 - vi. How did they sell it to the town for a successful referendum?
 - vii. Prepare questionnaire for teams to use during visit
 - 1. Staff and Commission and/or Town Council member to visit together
 - viii. Newington (new Community Center and separate from Senior Center), Mansfield – been in place for many years, Newtown recently built, received corporation funding, Bloomfield recently built but no pool, Plainville/Southington partners with the Y.
 - ix. With respect to “Y”, how would that work with Senior Center; build , operate, etc.? Making Berlin townspeople priority.
- d. Understand Berlin debt position and funding sources for construction
 - i. State, Federal, Corporate or Private grants
 - ii. National Organization grants
 - iii. Community Organizations
 - iv. Network & Contacts – Current & Past Political Leaders, Companies
 - v. Town and Impact to Taxes
- e. Operations: - two options to present (in house and outsource) with pros and cons
 - i. Create template and complete for operational costs
 - ii. Staffing - any organizational changes and staff backgrounds
 - iii. Utilities – any solar option?
 - iv. Technology
 - v. Maintenance – inside and outside
 - vi. If in house is maintenance outsourced? Any other outsourcing
 - vii. Savings offset; rentals and swim meets – check with other towns
 - viii. What is Berlin’s plans for current Community Center and Senior Center
- f. Any changes for public oversight (Commissions)

Statement of Need

The Commission for Aging requests that the planning process for a new Senior Center address needs at the current Berlin Senior Center. The planning process should include a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the facility and its programs, services, activities and operations.

The Berlin Senior Center is located at 33 Colonial Drive, which is adjoined to the Berlin Housing Authority Senior Housing Complex, Percival Heights, located at 31 Colonial Drive. The owner of this property is the Berlin Housing Authority. The Senior Center portion of the building is leased to the Town of Berlin. This building was originally built in 1956 as the Percival School, which closed in the late 1970s due to low enrollment. In 1981, it was proposed that it be turned into senior housing and the Senior Center. Renovation began in 1982 with the completion in 1985. Since that time there has been no major renovations or additions made to the Center.

The existing portion of the building used for the Senior Center is approximately 17,575 square feet in size, serving the 60 and over population of the Town of Berlin by providing its 5,865 members with programs, services and activities designed to provide access to leisure, intellectual, physical and cognitive activities, fostering new friendships and companionship, and developing strategies for successful aging for its members.

This is currently achieved primarily through an atmosphere of caring by the Center's Director and Assistant Director, staff, volunteers and user members, and by an efficient use of the existing and older undersized facility. Even though the building is well maintained, much of the facility is outdated and some areas have outlived their useful life.

The Senior Center is a vital part of this community. We are a lifeline for many seniors – enriching their lives, empowering and educating their minds. From July 2017 to April 2018, the Center served 2,916 congregate meals, transported 160 residents to medical appointments, grocery stores, the Senior Center itself, and had 25,366 (duplicated) seniors use the Center.

The Commission on Aging Recommends that the Following Criteria be included in the Request for Proposals for a Professional Consultant to Conduct the Senior and Community Center Planning Process

- Robust resident stakeholder input process. There should be an advisory committee that guides the planning process. The process should also include several public forums where residents are given the opportunity to comment on the project during the planning phase.
- Site selection criteria:
 - The entire facility should be located in a central area of town.
 - The parking area must be convenient to building with extra handicap parking available. Parking should be on a flat surface, rather than an incline in order to make it more accessible to older residents.
- Facilities criteria:

- Kitchen Area – large, commercial grade kitchen adequate for senior daily lunch program and special events.
- Craft room – ample amount of space for large tables and sewing machines.
- Library –needs to have ample amount of room for numerous shelving units for books and seating for groups to meet there.
- Meeting/classrooms – need to have plenty of storage along with counter space and sinks.
- Multi-purpose room with stage area– needs to have ample amount of space for daily lunch program and for our special programs which attract 100+ seniors. Music system with microphone/ directed speakers should be included.
- Exercise room- needs to have ample amount of space for exercise/yoga/dance classes with closets for equipment and cubbies or lockers for students to put belongings. Music system with microphone/ directed speakers should be included.
- Administration Offices – need to be centrally located in building so entrance can be monitored and members have easy access to front desk for questions. The Director's and Assistant Director's offices need to be located behind reception area to give staff privacy when working with members on confidential matters. Smaller office needed for part-time staff/volunteers/outreach.
- Computer room – need to have ample room and storage for technology classes.
- Conference room- ample amount of space to fit 10-12 chairs with table.
- Health room - needs to have plenty of storage with counter space and sink.
- Bus Drop Off Area - ample room for one bus drop off, shortest route for people with disabilities in getting to entrance of building and covered walkway.
- Bathrooms – need to have at least 2 main bathrooms, which include at least 4 stalls and two single bathrooms.

If the planning process includes an evaluation of building the new facility in partnership with the YMCA or another private entity, the final report must include an assessment of the costs and benefits of this arrangement to residents, such as whether the YMCA would take over existing town property; whether residents would be charged membership fees and how much these might cost; and restrictions on usage.

STATEMENT OF NEED

The Parks and Recreation Commission requests that the planning process for a new Community/Senior Center addresses needs of the residents of Berlin. The planning process should include a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the facility and its programs, services, activities, operations and patrons.

The current Community Center is located in the lower level of the Berlin-Peck Memorial Library. The Berlin-Peck Memorial Library's current location in the Town Hall Complex was built in 1989. In 1999, using state grant money, the Community Center was added to the lower level of the Library and opened to the public. The Town Council recognized that this was only a temporary situation and told the Library Board that in 10 years (2009), this lower level would be returned to the Library for its use. The Community Center is still housed in the lower level of this building.

In 2018, an elevator was constructed into the building to allow access from the Library to the Community Center respectively.

In its current space, the Community Center measures at a little over 24,000 square footage. It is open to all Berlin residents during normal business hours. A number of classes are held throughout the year and over 70 groups use the facility, including many Town Departments who use the building for meetings and trainings.

The current amenities include:

- Parks and Recreation Department (3,018 sq. ft.)
 - Includes offices, break room, storage rooms
- Activity Room (1,640 sq. ft.) – pool tables, air hockey, ping pong
- Exercise Room (1,750 sq. ft.) – free weights, universal gym, treadmills, stair/step machines, nautilus equipment, elliptical machines and stationary and recumbent bikes
- Meeting Rooms – rented for meetings, birthday parties, educational classes, etc.
 - Room 1 (880 sq. ft.)
 - Room 2 (820 sq. ft.)
 - Room 3 (700 sq. ft.)
 - Room 4 (770 sq. ft.)
 - Room 5 (400 sq. ft.)
 - Multi-purpose Room (2,450 sq. ft.)

The Community Center also currently houses the Friends of the Berlin-Peck Memorial Library Book Sale (1,500 sq. ft.).

The Community Center is a vital part of this town. The rooms are constantly being used by our local youth groups (both sports groups and civic groups), town departments and outside vendors. Residents may come and go as they please to use the exercise room and the activity room, free of charge. The Parks and Recreation Departments runs a variety of programs throughout the year in the meeting rooms as well as a very sought-after full day Summer Program for 60 participants.

The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends that the following criteria be included in the Request for Proposals for a professional consultant to conduct the Community/Senior Center Planning Process.

- Robust resident stakeholder input process. There should be an advisory committee that guides the planning process. The process should also include a survey of the public whether it be by public forum or by mail in order for residents to be given an opportunity to comment on the process.
- The Committee as designated should canvas other communities to finalize the specific needs in the Statement of Need.
- Site selection criteria:
 - The entire facility should be located in the central area of town.

- The parking area must be convenient to building and meet ADA standards.
- Facilities Criteria (57, 000 sq. ft.) – much of this area will be shared space coordinated with the Senior Center
 - Main Lobby Area – (600 sq. ft.)
 - Open access for the public, computer for internet, television, carpet, lounge furniture, coffee cart
 - Parks and Recreation Department (3,300 sq. ft.)
 - Includes offices, break room, storage room(s)
 - Activity Room (2,000 sq.ft.)
 - Exercise Room (3,000 sq. ft.)
 - Add more equipment and include space for classes (for example, spinning class)
 - Meeting Rooms (maintain current number, but increase size of each room)
 - Room 1 (1,000 sq. ft.)
 - Room 2 (1,000 sq. ft.)
 - Room 3 (1,000 sq. ft.)
 - Room 4 (1,000 sq. ft.)
 - Room 5 (800 sq. ft.)
 - Multi-purpose Room (3,000 sq. ft.)
 - Add modular flooring
 - Meeting rooms would also be better equipped with built in projector screens
 - 8 lane lap pool area (10,000 sq. ft. total area)
 - 8 lane pool (60 ft. by 75 ft.)
 - Including small office, storage room, filter room, retractable bleachers for spectator seating
 - Therapy pool
 - Diving Well
 - One (or two) 1-meter Diving Boards mounted in accordance with one of the following two options
 - Separate Diving Well
 - Minimum depth of 12 feet for a minimum length of 35 feet, 8 inches and minimum width of ~17 feet (1 board) or ~24 feet (2 boards) (reference: NCAA Rule 1 – Pool Dimensions and Equipment)
 - Diving Well Integrated into the Main Pool
 - Minimum depth of 12 feet for a minimum length of 16 feet forward from the plummet of the board and 8 feet to each side of the plummet of the board. (reference: CT Dept. of Health Reg. 6153 – Dated 3/17/2014)
 - Locker Rooms (2,000 sq. ft.)
 - Individual Family Changing Rooms
 - Men's and Women's locker rooms with showers, private changing area
 - Gym (14,000 sq. ft.)
 - 2 regulation basketball/volleyball courts with breakdown into side courts
 - Bleacher seating
 - Storage room
 - Suspended walking/jogging track (2 lanes)
 - Support Facilities (15,000 sq. ft.)
 - Boiler Room, Mechanical Room, Custodial Closets/Storage, Public Toilets, Corridors, Stairs/Elevator, Misc. storage

If the planning process includes an evaluation of building the new facility in partnership with the YMCA or another private entity, the final report must include an assessment of the costs and benefits of this arrangement to residents, such as whether the YMCA would take over existing town property; whether residents would be charged

membership fees and how much these might cost; and restrictions on usage. There should also be coordination with the current Parks and Recreation Department.

The new Community/Senior Center should be a smart building with all the most up to date technological advancements.

This statement of need is subject to change pending community and consultant input and review.

TOWN	PROJECT	SIZE	BUDGET	GRANTS/GIFTS	POPULATION	MED. HSH INCOME
Newtown	Community/Senior Center	45,000 SF	\$18 million	\$15 million total \$10 million construction \$5 million operating	27,173	\$127,602
Branford	Community/Senior Center	32,000 SF	\$12.24 million		27,900	\$77,640
Berlin	Community/Senior Center	74,000 SF	\$25 - 30 million		20,626	\$101,092
Bloomfield	Community Center	56,295 SF			21,022	
Rocky Hill	Senior Community Center	25,000 SF			20,168	
Willimantic	Senior Community Center	33,000 SF	\$14.6 million			
Mansfield	Community Center					
West Hartford						

AVAILABLE MEETING DATES – all at 6:00PM

Monday, October 18

Thursday, October 21

Monday, October 25

Thursday, October 28

Monday, November 1

Thursday, November 4

Thursday, November 18

Monday, November 22 (week of Thanksgiving)

Monday, November 29

Thursday, December 2

Monday, December 13

Thursday, December 16

Monday, December 20

Monday, December 27

Thursday, December 30

Thursday, January 6

Monday, January 10

Monday, January 17

Thursday, January 20

Thursday, January 27

Monday, January 31