

Community Center Committee Report to Board of Selectmen West Newbury, Mass.

Meeting Date: *July 24, 2017*

Currently, the West Newbury Senior Center is overflowing to accommodate the needs and demands its growing population of elders. The inadequate space and facilities are preventing the Senior Center from maximizing its potential for the town's aging residents and their immediate/extended families. Additionally, there are a number of other age groups and organizations in town that need a place to meet. As a result, in January 2016, the West Newbury Board of Selectmen approved that an intergenerational Community Center Committee (CCC) be formed.

The mission of the Community Center Committee is to study the feasibility and potential sites of an intergenerational community center for the Town of West Newbury, Mass., develop plans for such a facility, and come before Town Meeting with a request to fund this venture.

Ultimately, the CCC determined that repurposing **The Annex at the Town Hall, 381 Main Street** is the most viable *initial* option for the town's intergenerational community center. The following report summarizes the accomplishments of the CCC from its inception to present:

1. Formed a 10-person committee
2. Researched exemplary intergenerational community centers from around the U.S. from conception to ribbon cutting; Visited local community centers in The Commonwealth with excellent reputations
 - a. Newburyport
 - b. Tewksbury
 - c. Merrimac
3. With the leadership of a professional consultant, engaged members of the community for a two-part meeting to begin to gauge community needs and lay the groundwork for an upcoming community needs assessment. Community members represented:
 - a. Council on Aging
 - b. Friends of the Council on Aging
 - c. G.A.R. Memorial Library
 - d. Youth
 - e. Youth Sports
 - f. Parks & Recreation Committee
 - g. Parent Teach Organization (PTO)
 - h. Girls Scouts/Boy Scouts
 - i. West Newbury Youth League
 - j. Pentucket Arts Foundation
 - k. Garden Club
 - l. Law enforcement

4. Inventoried town's unused/underutilized properties with input from Open Space Committee, the Open Space 2016 community survey, and the Parks & Recreation Committee
 - a. Buildings
 - **The Annex at Town Hall (1910 building)**. Underutilized. Has ample parking. Has land for expansion. Abuts baseball fields and other recreational sites (e.g., gazebo).
 - **St. John's Hall**. Previously omitted by CCC due to not being centrally located. Already has parking. Historic building may be favored at Town Meeting. Has been looking for a way to convert for town use.
 - **Barn at Page School**. Has ample parking and back entrance.
 - **Old Town Hall** (across from Library). Underutilized. Beautiful historic building would be eligible for grants.
 - b. Land
 - **Mullen**. 34 acres. Town-owned. Centrally located. Among most affordable land options.
 - **Dunn**. Chase Street. Town-owned. Does not meet central location criteria. Among most affordable land options.
 - **Main St.** (near Page School). Adjacent to Page School parking. Land locked unless we purchase additional land.
 - **The Grange**. Large parcel of undeveloped land.
5. Identify building needs based on Council on Aging needs, which meets many of the Library's current needs as well:
 - a. Rooms
 - i. One large meeting room (200 seat capacity)
 - ii. Two small meeting rooms (10- 25) seating capacity)
 - iii. Full size kitchen
 - iv. Exercise room
 - v. Game room
 - vi. Restrooms
 - b. Technology
 - i. Wired Internet
 - ii. WIFI
 - iii. Cable
 - iv. Computer stations
6. Began identifying potential sources of seed funds for planning
7. Consulted local architect about potential sites and building needs with respect to other sizable upcoming town construction projects (i.e., Pentucket High School), and determined that repurposing an existing structure that is centrally located is the most practical, affordable, actionable option for an intergenerational community center.

8. The CCC determined that repurposing **The Annex at the Town Hall, 381 Main Street** is the most viable option for the following reasons:
- a. It can be repurposed so that it is **still a usable space for its current activities**:
 - i. Voting
 - ii. Town Meeting
 - iii. Exercise classes (i.e., gentle yoga)
 - iv. Smaller meetings and functions
 - b. It can be repurposed so that it provides space for groups that currently need space to meet/convene:
 - i. Council on Aging
 - ii. G.A.R. Memorial Library
 - iii. Public safety events
 - iv. Community and adult education
 - v. Several other community activities for all ages that currently do not exist because they don't have a space
 - c. Is a vastly **more affordable** construction project, compared to other options
 - d. It is geographically **central to community**, Burnam Field, elder housing, public safety, gazebo, Action Cove
 - e. Has **ample parking** for families, elders, etc.
 - f. **Will not disrupt current landscape** of town