

Town of Ayer

SCSSBC--Senior Center Site Selection and Building Committee

Meeting Minutes from March 25, 2024

1: Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Katie Petrossi at 5:30PM.

2: Members present: Katie Petrossi, Dan Van Schalkwyk, Ellen Fitzgerald, Chris Prehl, David Cibor, Ken Diskin, Dennis Curran, Carolyn McCreary, David Grubb participated remotely.

3: Agenda approved

4: Architect Presentations:

Abacus – Abacus was represented by: David Eisen, David Pollack, and Julia Patten.

Each committee member had previously been given and reviewed Abacus' response to the committee's request for proposals. Mr. Eisen and Ms. Patten provided a brief slide presentation of the firm's work along with introductory remarks. The firm was then asked a series of predetermined questions that had been solicited from the committee's members. (See attached). There were many thoughtful answers, some of which touched on the work Mr. Eisen had done for the previous iteration of the senior center building committee. Some follow-up questions were asked.

Bargmann Hendrie –BH&A was represented by Joel Bargmann.

Each committee member had previously been given and reviewed BH&A's response to the committee's request for proposals. Mr. Bargmann provided a slide presentation on the firm's previous work on senior/community centers as well as some introductory remarks regarding the firm's approach to site feasibility. He was then asked the same predetermined questions with some allowance for follow-up discussion.

Catlin – Catlin was represented by John Catlin, Barbara Arnold, Jamie Clark, and Dan Artz.

Each committee member had previously been given and reviewed Catlin's response to the request for proposals. Mr. Catlin provided a presentation on the firm's previous work on completed senior/community centers as well as some introductory remarks regarding the complex task of choosing a site. They were then asked the same predetermined questions with some allowance for follow-up discussion. Mr. Catlin also provided the committee with

the presentation he had given at the 2022 fall conference of the Massachusetts Council on Aging regarding current thinking on best practices for senior center design.

At the conclusion of the interviews the committee held a discussion regarding the interviews and how best to proceed with the selection process. It was agreed that each of the firms was qualified to do the work of assisting the town in selecting a site and providing conceptual designs for a senior center.

Mr. Prehl felt that Catlin was most impressive, and he liked the detailed understanding and thoughtfulness Mr. Catlin showed in designing buildings well-suited to the senior population.

Ms. McCreary also felt that Mr. Catlin had been the most impressive.

Mr. Curran felt that while Mr. Catlin had exhibited clear depth of knowledge regarding senior center design, Mr. Bargmann had seemed better organized and specific in his responses to the questions and that the BH&A written submission to the RFP was more detailed and on point. He also wondered about which architect the community would respond most positively to during public presentations.

Ms. Petrossi felt that each of the presentations showed different strengths, but that Catlin's depth of understanding regarding the needs of the senior population and how that was manifested in their building designs was a significant positive for her.

Ms. Fitzpatrick felt that Catlin was her preference and that his expertise and willingness to take charge of design decisions was an important strength. She acknowledged that based on reference checks Mr. Catlin had a strong personality which could create conflicts with committee or community members who might disagree with some of his design decisions.

Mr. Diskin felt that BH&A had given the best presentation and that his financial projections regarding the scope of the work requested were more on point. He also felt that we are too early in the process for discussion of interior design concepts, the specifics of building construction, building materials, etc and that BH&A was his preference to meet our current needs for site feasibility and conceptual design.

Mr. Van Schalkwyk said that he felt all three respondents could do the work. He saw Bargmann as describing the nuts and bolts of how he would approach the task. He felt Catlin was most willing to "drive the bus" and provide firm direction to the committee and that Abacus was more comfortable letting the committee "drive the bus."

While Mr. Grubb did not render an opinion this evening, the committee acknowledged that he had previously voiced strong reservations regarding BH&A.

It was the consensus view of the committee that Catlin and BH&A were the two strongest candidates, and that the committee would move forward with a more detailed look at each of them, perhaps with site visits to some of their completed work. The committee thanked David Eisen and Abacus for their previous work with the Town's site selection committee.

The committee discussed the possibility of making site visits to see samples of the work of Catlin and BH&A.

The next committee meeting was scheduled for Wednesday April 3, 2024, at 6:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00PM

Meeting minutes taken by Dennis Curran, Clerk.

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