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Ayer COA Board Monthly Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 2:00 PM
Meeting Held via Zoom per Covid Requirements
Minutes compiled by Janine Nichipor, Clerk

In Attendance:

COA Director Katie Petrossi
Carolyn McCreary, Chairperson
Janine Nichipor, Clerk
Dennis Curran, Board Member
Sister Paula McCrea, Board Member
Carole Tillis, Board Member
Cindy Knox, Town IT
David Eisen, Abacus Architects and Planners

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approve Minutes - Dec. 7, Dec. 21
3. Director's report
4. Annual report - due Feb 28
5. Review of Abacus report
6. Programmatic needs in the future full-service center
7. Design and layout needs of new center
8. Branding - see Janine's document
9. Old business
10. New Business
11. Adjourn

1. Meeting called to order at 2:02 PM by Carolyn McCreary, Chairperson

- We are meeting via Zoom due to current Covid restrictions.
- Many on the Board personally know people who have Covid due to the recent surge.

2. Minutes

- Janine sent minutes to COA Board Group email. Carolyn and Carole did not receive it; Dennis and Katie did receive. Sister Paula needs a print copy. Katie can provide and perhaps create a mailbox at the Center for Sister Paula?
- Janine will re-send to individual town email accounts for approval at next meeting.
- Cindy said that other boards sometimes send a copy to personal emails to notify people who don't look at town email a lot. Just don't reply from personal email.

3. Director's Report

- Everyone has seen the report, so Janine suggested that Katie mention highlights.
- Katie has a meeting Jan. 19th regarding capital request.

- Fire suppression quote now needed for kitchen. Brings cost up to \$112,000 now. Two options: Full amount for stove, vent/suppression, triple sink, oven and dishwasher. Without the suppression system cannot cook anything causing grease vapor. Can boil water, pasta, veggies. Second option: \$40,000-\$45,000 for oven and veggie chopping only.
- Existing oven is not working well. A new oven and commercial stove would allow more usage, but need the suppression system to fully use.
- Board of Health: inspects that we are clean and sanitary. Fire code: deals with vent/suppression system.
- Carole asked Katie which she would like to advocate for? Katie wants the full amount. It is not a huge amount of money in the scope of the Town's budget and makes the kitchen much more useful.
- My Senior Center software system is starting to be used. Senior Center visitors have been fine with getting and using their key cards.
- Katie reported that the Town Manager is okay with the COA Budget for FY 2023.
- Addressing the Covid Food Grant, its original intent and how we can use for food: 45 people scheduled tomorrow for a delivery from Lucia's. Went to congregate meals, now doing two special meal deliveries in Jan. 2022. Covid funds probably will be spent by end of January.
- Covid: 96% of Ayer's seniors have been vaccinated; social isolation and cardiovascular consequences of the pandemic.
- Carole Tillis spoke up regarding use of masks in the Center. Katie reviewed the rules that masks are required except when actively eating. Notify Katie if someone is not following the rules.
- Janine noted that husband's workplace has some who don't want to comply. Katie wants to keep on top of it and will remind those who need to be reminded.
- Sister Paula received a notice from the Ayer Housing Authority to wear masks in all part of the building.
- Carole and Carolyn are available for backup deliveries of food.

4. Annual Report

- In the past, who did the Report? Director Karin Dynice-Swanfeldt.
- It is a one-page addition on the COA to the Town of Ayer Annual Report.
- Janine looked it up and it was about a half-page last time; will send text to COA Board for reference.
- Carolyn will split the work with Sister Paula creating this year's COA portion.

5. Review of Abacus report from October, 2020

6. Programmatic needs in the future full-service center

7. Design and layout needs of new center

- Discussion touched on all of the topics in agenda items 5, 6, and 7.
- Re Sites: Contaminated site? Better sites? Want to move forward? Change site?
- Janine would like to get a copy of the Report. Dennis has some reports. Katie responded and shared this Report with the Board via email.

- David Eisen entered the meeting and he identified this report as a 31-page final report by Abacus which reviews what had been done to date.
- Katie wanted to focus on the floor plans, shifting from the location. Janine agreed since the location is undecided and was tabled at the town meeting.
- Denis asked if the plans were site specific or not?
- David said we can adapt plans to different sites. Reviewed Number 5 in the Report and that the thoughts that went into this site regarding the square footage, privacy, multi-use, parking, are adaptable. Issues are typical to COAs; square footage is on board with size of the community. Entrance can be adapted to site. This site had front to town, back to nature, which other sites might also accomplish.
- Janine reviewed that all along the big three issues have been space (including fully certified kitchen), privacy, and parking.
- Janine referred to a report that Sister Paula had written up, past minutes (Janine will re-send for posting) and other concerns have already been addressed; we just need to edit. We are more like at Square 10, not Square 1.
- Dennis looking at drawing agreed not at Square 1 and a lot of thought has gone into the plans. He had a question on the kitchen.
- David said it is strategically located for pick-up, trash, near Great Room, accessible to everything. Big enough to have cooking classes, which are popular.
- Dennis brought up capacity. Katie and David talked about the square footage and that 200 could be in Great Room: 10 people per sq. ft. If at tables, 150 people total.
- Katie mentioned Townsend Senior Center and Janine Groton Senior Center: their shapes, size, and Groton's large room can even become a pickleball court.
- Re pickleball: Katie says pickleball court is 30 X 60 feet. Dennis concerned about correct surface and possible injuries. Janine didn't know if just 1 indoor court was really enough. Maybe some outdoors at some point?
- Carolyn asked Katie if she would change the office space on report?
- Katie mentioned a kitchenette in café area would be well used; and a covered entry for MART van to make it safer for clients and employees.
- Janine suggested swap rest room in back with game room in the front for accessibility; realizing plumbing needs to be considered.
- Katie said Wellness Room and Staff Bathroom can move together and do double duty.
- Carolyn asked if we can do outdoor pickleball? Katie replied that would be site specific.
- Sister Paula asked to identify the Dining Area. Katie replied that half of the Great Room (which will have a divider) would be typical dining area; we are looking for larger attendance at meals.
- Katie was looking at closets to be correct shape for chairs and tables. David said cart-mounted chairs/tables will need exact dimensions of the product and will see how to accommodate.
- Dennis brought up the Great Room exits; David said they are designed to be an extension of the indoors to the outside; Janine extended on Dennis' thoughts looking to remove a tree in design so that Great Room can exit directly via sidewalk to parking lot.
- David took notes and said we can revise plan to site we choose.
- Dennis affirmed that 11,000 sq. ft. is our usable size. Can we do this on 2 floors? David said that stairs and elevator would take up space and cost money. Some places

like 2 floors for separation of activities. If site ends up too small for 1 floor, then probably can do 2 smaller floors.

- Carolyn asked regarding how much to clean up the West Main Street site, and can Abacus do this? Carolyn advocates for clean-up.
- Katie said that we are at a loss on how much to say or not say due to the nature of the executive committee. She did say that W. Main is not the only site under consideration.
- The next meeting is coming up and will take a look at environmental concerns.
- Carole Tillis said we need to get ducks in a row before town meeting if we are to be able to convince that this is a clean site.
- David knows of another clean-up site and company involved. He can pass this info. town managers and DPW.
- Janine made a case for choosing the best place for our clients, and not have urban renewal or toxic clean-up being piggy-backed onto our important project. She shared Carole's earlier thoughts that more sites might be available to consider after Covid.
- Further communication on this to Abacus and the Building Committee can be through Katie. David exited meeting.

8. Branding

- Janine thinks that signs, name tags, business cards, signatures should look similar to help in recognition and clarifying our identity and the relationship between the Council on Aging (COA) and the Senior Center.
- Dennis likes "Senior Center." Distinction?
- Katie said that the state mandates a COA. They can have staff; we are all the staff of the COA. Katie is the Director; not on the Board. COAs use the same state website template. Katie mentioned that she would like more distinction on our website—would like to redirect our COA and COA Board, currently listed separately on the town website to move into the same. Will work with Cindy Knox on this.
- Dennis asked about the vocabulary?
- Janine likened it to the "see the church/see the people" we used to know as kids. The *people* are the COA and the *building* is the Senior Center? Katie said she is the Director of the Senior Center. [Note: in the past Karin was listed as Director of the COA.]
- Sister Paula said we could call ourselves the "Ayer Senior Center" and our *motto* could be: "Center for Active Living."
- Consensus was that we will be called "Ayer Senior Center."
- Katie is thinking about our signage and would like something nicer and less like a street sign.
- Next time: how to create, share and talk about Branding.

9. Old Business

10. New Business

- Janine brought up that she would like to continue to work with the Senior Center Building Committee. This was why she had been asked to join the COA and had been

involved since the beginning until the break due to Covid. She thought it appropriate for the COA to be well represented on the committee with both Dennis and Janine on the committee. We would be covered in case of absence, and could incorporate the history of the project with new ideas.

- Janine was nominated to serve on the Building Committee and unanimously voted in.

11. Adjourned 3:43 PM

- Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 1 at 2:00 PM.

Carolyn McCreary