

Meeting Minutes  
Senior Committee Meeting  
Monday, October 7, 2013  
Conference A, City Hall

Members Present: Robert J. Lister, Chairman; Nancy Novelline Clayburgh, Councilor; Jack Jamison, Judy Bunnell, Nancy Andrews  
Absent: Maureen O’Leary; Martha Fuller Clark, Senator  
City Staff Present: Brinn Chute, Senior Services Coordinator; Adam Cannon, Special Projects Manager

Chairman Lister opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. He then briefly informed the Committee that the release of the Doble Center has shifted to a different process. Originally, the Doble Center was to be released to the City through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. The City was recently informed that the release would go through a property disposal procedure controlled by the GSA. As such, the release of the property may take longer than originally expected. Chairman Lister also added that forty people signed a petition urging the Committee to choose the Doble Center property as a senior center. Councilor Clayburgh stated that she believed that the Doble Center would be vacated by March and following this, a report would be completed, which will then allow for a property release sometime thereafter.

Ms. Andrews stated that she is concerned about having a “Plan B”. She also asked how many people are members at Spinnaker Point and how many of those members are aged 50+. Senior Services Coordinator Brinn Chute stated that she did not have the figures for 50+, but that there are greater than 500 senior members at Spinnaker.

Following this, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.

Chairman Lister stated that he concurred with Ms. Andrews suggestion of a “Plan B” as he wants to ensure that a senior center is established in a timely fashion and also added that he is interested in having the Committee send a letter to the City Manager voicing support for Doble as an option. Councilor Clayburgh then motioned to recommend to the City Council the Doble Center as the Committee’s first choice for a senior center with a second from Ms. Andrews. The Committee unanimously approved the motion.

Ms. Andrews stated that she would like to reflect upon the site selection and talk about ideas. She noted that sidewalks continue from the center all the way to downtown and that the sheer square footage of the property could bring some satellite programs together as a one stop shop for senior services. She added that there could be activities within the multi-car garage and fitness and wellness activities.

Councilor Clayburgh said that she believed that the Doble Center offered a win/win proposition as there is no acquisition cost for the property. Chairman Lister stated that he has heard from people that they would like to facility to be utilized. Ms. Chute indicated that the sidewalks are wide for pedestrian access and that the City, in general, is working towards complete-streets to balance pedestrians and cars. She also added that the City would ask COAST for a bus stop as well. Noting the size of the property, Ms. Chute stated that the property is primed to be inclusive of the whole community and creates income and rent opportunities.

Councilor Clayburgh asked if the yellow gate could be eliminated. Ms. Chute replied that once the property was conveyed to the City, the City would be able to make any changes that it wished. Ms. Andrews noted that people have voiced concern with the proximity to the traffic circle and the possibility that there may be a lot of noise, but that she didn't notice any problems from the circle.

Next the Committee briefly discussed a potential Plan B. Ms. Chute noted that a solid "Plan B" could be utilizing the space abutting the Spinnaker Point property as a community/senior center location. At the moment, the City is currently conducting a title search on land abutting Spinnaker Point. If the City owns this piece of land, then potential for a new build and additional parking is possible.

Councilor Clayburgh also asked about whether the Committee should recommend a name for the center. Chairman Lister stated that the new U.S. Army Reserve Center will also be named after Doble and that the Committee should think about a recommendation for a name. Ms. Andrews recommended "Adult Community Center" as the name. Ms. Bunnell stated that most seniors don't want to attend places with the words senior, elderly, and older folks. She also added that it's important that the community be educated about this trend.

Chairman Lister shifted the discussion over to programming. Ms. Chute gave a short presentation on the six dimensions of wellness. The dimensions are as follows: social, vocational, physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual. She noted that at the 2013 Senior Center Conference they recommended building the foundation for a senior center based upon the dimensions. She also stated that there is a pre-existing stigma in relation to "senior" verbiage and that it was important to think about intergenerational buy-in from the entire community while having a massive variety of senior programming.

Continuing, Ms. Chute stated that there could be vocational opportunities for people aged 50+ and that operational costs could be offset through the intergenerational component. She added that the Doble Center allows for growth and expansion of programming.

Chairman Lister asked the Committee to think about the partnerships that the City could form as part of this process. He also stated that he would like to ensure that there are opportunities for public input from residents and encourages them to participate. Ms. Andrews stated there would be ample opportunities for input including the Senior

Luncheons, programming surveys, at Committee meetings and at the PORT meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Levenson Room of the Library.

Next, the Committee began to discuss the mission statement. Ms. Andrews indicated that she would like to see a focus on Portsmouth's quality of life in the mission statement and to see the word adult in the statement. She also added that she likes the Recreation Department mission statement's responsiveness to needs. Councilor Clayburgh inquired if the Six Dimensions of Wellness should be included in the statement. Brinn replied that it should be included in the goals. Chairman Lister thought it was important to include as a framework and that goals should include the right terminology to educate people about the purpose of the facility as a home for older adults.

Ms. Chute inquired as to whether the Committee should ask for an extension in order to discuss some items in more detail. Chairman Lister stated that it's really important to start the process as he would like to see some movement on the issue this year. Mr. Cannon stated that it was important to complete the work of the Committee prior to the arrival of the incoming City Council as the priorities of the new City Council may be different and also in order to help give the City Manager a recommendation on what staff actions to take prior to the beginning of the next budget season. By voting to accept the report and recommendations, the City Council can authorize the City Manager to begin the process of working towards a senior center. Councilor Clayburgh noted that the budget process begins at the end of January and does not end typically until late spring. She also added that the City budget needs to be passed by June 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Chairman Lister stated that it was important to lay the groundwork for the incoming City Council.

The Committee moved onto a discussion on funding. Ms. Bunnell spoke briefly regarding the Senior Center Conference and stated that there are some examples of pilot programs with the National Center on Aging (NCOA) that she would like to share at the next meeting. She also noted the differences in funding between NH and other states. Massachusetts, for example, gets some state funding for senior centers whereas New Hampshire does not. Ms. Andrews stated that she would reach out to have the state legislature involved. Ms. Chute recommended a Committee similar to the "Friends of the Cochecho Arts Festival", perhaps called a Portsmouth Council on Aging, which could hunt for grant opportunities and collect donations on behalf of the senior center. Ms. Andrews recommended researching AARP funding and asked if the budget was available from the former PHA-run senior center.

Ms. Chute stated that the Spinnaker and Connie Bean budgets are good examples of what a budget would be like at a senior center to establish a framework for costs. Councilor Clayburgh asked how specific the Committee should be in regards to programs and budgeting. Mr. Cannon replied that the Committee should consider proposing a sample operations budget focusing primarily on staffing. The costs of retrofitting the Doble facility are unknown until the City receives the property and the City Manager is authorized to retain a consultant for engineering and design services. He also stated that it was important not to price each program out one-by-one, but rather to think about a vision of programming.

The Committee discussed some specific programming ideas. Mr. Jamison suggested a fantasy football league and for an opportunity for people to create individual gatherings at the center. Ms. Andrews would like to see a welcoming front desk and a center with intellectual programming and lifelong learning. Ms. Bunnell recommended preventative services and evidence-based physical activities. Ms. Chute stated that prescription education was the next wave in senior services. Mr. Jamison stated that he'd like to see a drop-in center and a café, perhaps stratified for men and women. Councilor Clayburgh asked if there should be a survey. Ms. Chute noted that she has done a survey through the senior services office and that Ms. Andrews has done a survey through the PORT group.

Next, the Committee moved on to partnerships. Mr. Jamison suggested that the Library should be a part of the programming. Ms. Chute stated that they currently are a big part of interim services and that one service they could provide is computer training. Ms. Bunnell noted the diverse, skilled and vast volunteer pool in Portsmouth.

Ms. Andrews stated that she is concerned about the spiritual component of the six dimensions of wellness. Chairman Lister stated that he had spoken with a retired minister who is eager to contribute to senior services. Ms. Chute stated that the spiritual component could be self-directed with self-initiated Bible study groups or self-initiated meditation or meditation groups in a garden. The spiritual component would not condone active proselytizing or money collections, but also would not prohibit seniors from joining a self-initiated religious group utilizing space in the center.

Closing the meeting, Chairman Lister discussed the remaining meeting schedule and stated that Mondays were difficult for a couple of attendees. The Committee decided to hold the next meeting on Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in Conference Room A. The Committee also wanted the minutes to reflect a public participation opportunity at the PORT Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00 p.m. in the Library's Levenson Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Adam Cannon