

MEETING MINUTES  
Community Facilities Building Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, March 9, 2022

In attendance:

Lori Hayes-O'Brien, Chair  
Dawn Cantafio, Vice Chair  
Mike Buswell  
Ted Chase  
Ron Foligno  
Dave Galla  
Tony Silber

Not in attendance:

Dean Fabrizio  
Gail Ritacco

Guests:

Michele Jakab, Director of Human Services  
Cindy Penkoff, 1 Columbine Drive  
Joelle Hallajian, 19 Woodlawn Drive  
Liz Parenzan, 26 Meadow View Drive

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Ms. Cindy Penkoff addressed the committee, expressing her strong feeling that any project of this size should be brought before the town as a referendum.

Ms. Joelle Hallajian voiced her opposition to a community and aquatic center, noting that she lives in the neighborhood and has concerns about the disruption and devaluation caused by potential development in the Hardy Lane area. She added that she feels the money would be better spent improving Trumbull schools.

Ms. Liz Parenzan echoed Ms. Penkoff's statement that the project should be brought as a referendum, as well as Ms. Hallajian's assertion that money should be spent in the schools. She also cited current economic concerns of the community in relation to a multimillion-dollar building project.

Public comment was closed at 7:09 p.m.

MOTION to accept 2/9/22 meeting minutes made by Mr. Galla, seconded by Mr. Foligno. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

The committee was joined by Michele Jakab, Director of Human Services. Mrs. Jakab gave an overview of some of the continued concerns regarding the Senior Center. At its current location, there is not enough space for programming or parking. The most recent architect's drawings meet the needs of the Senior Center, however, if the center were combined with a community center, only a few small changes would be needed to share the space with Parks and Recreation programming.

The center would like the social services and food pantry areas to have a separate entrance to preserve their privacy. The current layout of the building makes donation and pickup less efficient.

Mr. Chase asked about the impact of staffing a larger space with additional programming in terms of staffing costs. Mrs. Jakab replied that a priority would be to bring back custodial staff, but her staff is able to maintain the current programming needs. In addition to the staff, several members who volunteer their time.

Mr. Chase also asked about the current state of the building. Mrs. Jakab answered that while the building is safe, there are significant concerns including lifting flooring and flooding in the boiler room during heavy rains, as well as mildew affecting the salon. Mold remediation has been done previously, and may have to be done again.

Mr. Chase asked about membership. Prior to the pandemic, the center had about 2,000 members. Members were not asked to renew during the pandemic and membership is currently at about 1,000 (registered and paid). The center was able to grow its database to approximately 6,000 individuals over the age of 60. Mr. Galla asked about the cost of membership. For residents, it is \$5 per year, and for nonresidents it is \$20 per year.

Mr. Foligno asked Mrs. Jakab to explain additional costs incurred by members. She noted that trips and transportation are not covered by membership, and there is a suggested donation for the Tuesday and Thursday lunch offering. Additionally, some arts and craft projects have an associated fee, depending on the materials or size of the project.

Mr. Silber asked Mrs. Jakab to characterize the use of the center. The highest number of individual members on a given day was 85, with the lowest being 69. The twice-weekly lunch typically sees between 20 and 30 participants. She noted that these numbers have only been taken since the center reopened at the end of January (it was closed temporarily due to a spike in Covid numbers after the holidays).

Mrs. Cantafio invited Mrs. Jakab to contact the committee if she sees any additional needs that should be considered.

The committee discussed Mr. Estrada's referendum timeline. Mr. Chase asked where the Town Council is on guidance for the committee. Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien answered that the Council did not have the project on the agenda for March. There is no guarantee on timing of the Council's decision, but Mr. Estrada was hopeful that there would be some movement in April. She also reminded the committee

that the Hardy Lane property was not among the sites scored by the architect prior to Covid. The committees need direction from the Town Council in order to continue work.

Mr. Buswell asked about opening a discussion about the committee members' opinions on the Hardy Lane properties. Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien agreed that it is important to have those conversations, however, they probably should be put on hold until the committee receives direction one way or the other from Town Council. She did note that this is a good time to develop questions the committee may want to ask about the site. Mr. Galla added that extensive discussion has been had about previously considered locations and the same would be had in the future if a resolution directs the committee to explore Hardy Lane.

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien opened the floor to comments or concerns from committee members, and Mr. Buswell mentioned the concerns of and impact on neighbors and Mr. Silber's previous comments regarding environmental impact. Mr. Chase agreed and asked if the committee would be able to find out what a developer had planned for the property and how it compares to the proposed project. Cost and traffic will be two major concerns.

Mr. Galla pointed out that the Hardy Lane property is significantly larger than some of the previous considerations, but that all potential sites will have impact on neighborhoods and the environment. Mr. Chase agreed that the committee needs to understand the impact on neighbors. Mrs. Cantafio noted that the Hardy Lane site only has 10-12 buildable acres, and that the conversation will be furthered once the committee has its specific direction.

Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien informed the committee that the Aquatics Facility Building Committee voted against renovating the Hillcrest Pool after receiving the final engineering reports.

Mr. Silber offered his thanks to Mrs. Hayes-O'Brien, Mrs. Cantafio, and Mr. Marsh of the Aquatics committee for their leadership throughout this process.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 13.

MOTION to adjourn made by Mrs. Cantafio, seconded by Mr. Foligno. The motion carried by unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Submitted by Laura Shiel