



CITY OF NEWBURYPORT
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
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TO: MAYOR JOHN MOAK
FROM: SEAN SULLIVAN
DATE: JUNE 30, 2009
RE: SENIOR CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT

IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR, THE COUNCIL ON AGING BUILDING COMMITTEE SELECTED COURTSTREET ARCHITECTS, INC. THROUGH THE DESIGNER SELECTION PROCESS REQUIRED BY THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO PREPARE A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO DESIGN A SENIOR CENTER AT CUSHING PARK.

IN 2006, THE ARCHITECT PREPARED A BRIEF SENIOR CENTER STUDY FOR THE CITY AT THE SAME SITE. THE SOLUTION AT THAT TIME WAS TO LOCATE THE SENIOR CENTER ALONG KENT STREET AND TO MAINTAIN THE EXISTING PAVED RECREATIONAL AREA. SENIOR CENTER PARKING WAS PLACED BETWEEN THE PROPOSED SENIOR CENTER AND THE RECREATIONAL AREA. THIS PROPOSAL WAS PRESENTED TO THE NEIGHBORS AT THE SITE. IT WAS CLEAR BY THEIR RESPONSE THAT THERE WAS GREAT CONCERN REGARDING WINTER PARKING AS WELL AS PRESERVATION OF RECREATIONAL SPACE FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

IN 2009 THE ARCHITECT WAS DIRECTED TO ONCE AGAIN STUDY THE CUSHING PARK SITE, OF WHICH THE FIRST STEP WAS TO REVISIT THE LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED SENIOR CENTER WITH REGARD TO THE NEIGHBORS CONCERNS FOR PARKING, RECREATION, NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT AND SAFETY FOR CHILDREN. THE ARCHITECT WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE BUILDING COMMITTEE AND STUDIED MORE THAN A HALF DOZEN DIFFERENT OPTIONS BEFORE RECOMMENDING A SCHEME THAT PLACED THE BUILDING IN THE CENTER OF THE SITE WITH PARKING IN FRONT OF THE STRUCTURE. THIS SCHEME EXPANDED THE EXISTING PLAYGROUND/PARK, BUT ELIMINATED THE PAVED RECREATIONAL AREA. SPACE NEEDS AND BUILDING DESIGN WERE ALSO REFINED. THE COMMITTEE MET WITH THE NEIGHBORS IN A PUBLIC MEETING ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 28, 2009 TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED PLAN AND TO SOLICIT FEEDBACK. THIS MEETING WAS VERY WELL ATTENDED AND MANY COMMENTS WERE PROVIDED TO THE COMMITTEE RESULTING IN A REFINEMENT OF THE PRELIMINARY DESIGN SCHEME.

THE COMMITTEE TOOK THE NEIGHBORS CONCERNS FROM THIS APRIL MEETING, AND WITH THE HELP OF COURT STREET ARCHITECTS, REFINED THE PROPOSAL EVEN FURTHER. A SECOND MEETING WITH THE NEIGHBORS WAS HELD AT THE LIBRARY ON MAY 21, 2009, TO REVIEW PROGRESS MADE. THE DESIGN WAS WELL RECEIVED AND ONLY VERY MINOR ADJUSTMENTS WERE NECESSARY. ONE CONCERN EXPRESSED WAS FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCALE OF

THE BUILDING. THIS CONCERN WAS ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL PACKAGE THROUGH RENDERINGS THAT INCLUDED NOT ONLY THE NEW BUILDING, BUT THE EXISTING CONTEXT AS WELL.

THE FOLLOWING OUTLINE HIGHLIGHTS THE SIGNIFICANT ITEMS OF THE DESIGN:

- SENIOR CENTER WILL BE PLACED ALONG KENT STREET CLOSE TO THE WASHINGTON STREET INTERSECTION SO THAT THE NEW BUILDING BLENDS INTO THE FABRIC OF THE EXISTING HOMES.
- THERE WILL BE AN ENTRANCE AND TERRACE ON BOTH KENT STREET AND IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING ALONG THE PARKING LOT.
- A VEHICULAR DROP-OFF AREA WILL BE DESIGNED FOR THE BUILDING.
- SERVICE FOR THE BUILDING WILL BE ACCESSED FROM KENT STREET. A SMALL DUMPSTER WILL BE PLACED ON A CONCRETE BASE AND FENCED IN WITH AN OPAQUE WOODEN FENCE.
- A FENCE AND TREE-LINED BUFFER WILL BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN ABUTTING PROPERTIES AND THE PROPOSED SENIOR CENTER.
- A PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY WILL BE INSTALLED FROM KENT STREET TO ALLOW PEDESTRIANS TO ACCESS THE PARKING LOT .
- THE PROPOSED SENIOR CENTER WILL PROVIDE FIFTY-FOUR PARKING SPACES (54) AND THERE WILL BE OVERFLOW PARKING IN THE PAVED RECREATIONAL AREA OF ANOTHER TWENTY-FOUR (24) SPACES.
- THE PAVED ENTRANCE INTO THE SENIOR CENTER WILL BE PLACED AS FAR AWAY FROM THE PLAY AREA AS POSSIBLE SO AS TO MINIMIZE PEDESTRIAN/VEHICULAR CONFLICTS.
- THE BUILDING IS DESIGNED TO RELATE TO THE EXISTING HOUSES IN MASS AND IS SENSITIVE TO THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CHARACTER OF THE CITY OF NEWBURYPORT.

THE PROPOSED BUILDING SQUARE FOOTAGE IS 11,080 WITH A BASEMENT THAT COULD PROVIDE FOR ANOTHER 5,300 SQUARE FEET OF EXPANSION AT A FUTURE TIME. THE TOTAL PROJECT COST IS ESTIMATED TO BE \$6.8 MILLION DOLLARS. THIS ESTIMATE IS BASED ON CURRENT COSTS.

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE LET ME KNOW.

THANK YOU.