

Community/Senior Center Meeting Minutes

P.Stockwell , Clerk

Date: 4/24/23

Time: 1 PM to 5:30 PM

Location: Meeting Rm 1 Town Hall

Purpose: Presentations and Interview Top 4 RFQ Selections

Attendees: Kara Hmielowski - Executive Assistant, Karyn Riopel - Chair, Pat Stockwell - Clerk, Donald Konopacki, Patsy Rydlak, Hank Camosse, Michael Zereski, representatives of DBVW Architects, Gorman, Richardson, Lewis Architects (GRLA), T2 Architecture and Catlin Architecture

Chair Karyn Riopel called the meeting to order, welcomed each group of presenters separately and everyone did introductions.

Committee members took notes to be kept as public record.

DBVW Architects was 1st to present. They had 3 presenters and did a slide presentation.

The committee asked many questions, both during and after the presentation and all presenters were friendly, responsive and professional.

A couple of highlights: Lots of municipal buildings experience, mostly Town Halls but a few Town Halls with Senior Centers and other senior living facilities. Did at least 1 recent challenging Community/Senior Center through the pandemic for less than the original budget. Recently completed a project in Norton which resulted in 2 buildings, a new Town Hall and a new Senior Center. Had clearly visited Charlton and walked our historic center mentioning ideas for paths etc to make it more “walking friendly”. They clearly understood the importance and various methods of outreach to stakeholders and seemed willing to assist with ideas to “sell it” to the public. They mentioned flyers with QR codes and informational pamphlets distributed in public buildings and businesses around town.

1 hour and 5 minutes

Gorman, Richardson, Lewis Architects (GRLA) presented 2nd. They had 3 presenters as well but did not do a visual slide presentation. The Project Manager/Interior Designer Rebecca Burlingame is a resident of Charlton. They were professional and answered several questions.

Highlights: They had clearly visited the Charlton properties, inspected the Senior Center, Chip-In and spoke with directors along with viewing the Dresser Hill Rd property. Although they have many years experience, they only referenced 2 similar projects which were not specifically Community nor Senior Centers. One was a renovation of a historic house in Boxford which included replacing a barn with a space for seniors and a second the adaptive re-use of a historic farmhouse to a Center for the Arts in Hopkinton. They seem to be very technology oriented and willing to produce documents and digital visuals for the committee to share in any marketing campaign, but said regarding outreach “you know your community best” and that communicating to them “is your problem”.

55 minutes

T2 Architects presented 3rd. They had 3 presenters and also did a visual slide presentation. All 3 stood up throughout the presentation to swap in and out to speak during the talk. They were friendly, responsive and professional and also answered our many questions.

Highlights: They have many years of municipal experience with public buildings. This includes an adaptive re-use as a Senior/Community Center of a historic barn and farmhouse with an addition called the Center at Sachem Rock in East Bridgewater, the very challenging Sterling Senior Center, the Dedham Town Hall & Senior Center and the Upton Municipal Community Center scheduled to open in May which also faced challenges due to the pandemic and supply chain issues. They referenced multiple projects in which they came in under with very strict budgets. They referred to their ability as “effective communicators” and “knowing how to build energy for a project”, and indicated having to use various types of outreach to the public. In addition to the usual meetings and workshops, this included mailers to all voters in town and even did a door knocking campaign where they went to senior housing and other locations seniors were located and spoke to them personally about the project. They seem like problem solvers having given examples of various problems that arose in projects that they resolved to get to completion, including a town being accepted for MSBA in the middle of a Senior Center project and ultimately getting acceptance for both. The Upton Community Center project started as 3 buildings with financial challenges that they worked through to a 3 in 1 shared space building for much less money. Sterling had many issues from siting to financial and even a shared parking lot which they resolved to completion.

50 minutes

Catlin Architecture presented last. The company had just one presenter who arrived late and did a slide presentation which filled the entire hour without leaving time for questions. A couple of questions were asked and answered, bringing us past the allotted hour.

Highlights: Lots of municipal buildings experience in very large and wealthy communities. Very “seniors” focused, not really mentioning Community Centers until pressed, saying “senior centers are community centers”. Seems very, very knowledgeable about detailed needs of seniors and showed various buildings with many design details geared toward that. I.e- wide sensor operated doors, striped carpets, cozy sitting areas by fireplaces, exercise options for “young, healthy” seniors like pickleball courts etc. All things to keep in mind when we are at the design phase of our project.

60 minutes

Followup:

The committee then took a quick vote on their top choices. T2 was the top choice with 5 of 6 votes, DBVW was the next vote getter as the 2nd choice and GLRA was third.

It was agreed that the committee would like to visit a few of the properties discussed in the presentations. Selected at the time was the Center at Sachem Rock in East Bridgewater, The Sterling Senior Center and the Upton Municipal Community Center, all T2 properties. It was also suggested that members email any additional choices to Andrew so he can make arrangements for tours.

Meeting adjourned without a motion.