

NewCAL Listening Session Comments

September 17, 2018

7:00PM

Newton Free Library
330 Homer Street
Newton Center

Margaret Ford introduced the event.

Jonathan Yeo provided introductions.

Alex Valcarce provide an overview of the project. Goal is to try to hear from as many different folks to understand the needs in the community.

Over summer we advertised for RFQ for an OPM as well as for a Designer to help with programming, which is the current phase. Introduced Melissa from NV5 and Joe Sirkovich and Teresa Wilson from Steffian Bradley.

Want to hear from all of you to hear your ideas and concerns as we work through the process. Need to come up with a theory of how to program the facility then will start to look at sites and how these various program may come together.

Where is funding coming from?

We will need to look at where funding will come from - from the City's operating budgets, partnering with private development, donations. Goal is to first understand need.

Has the current senior center been ruled out for the project?

Like with all projects, part of the process always includes a thorough study of the existing building. The current building is 8,000SF. As the program is developed, it may prove that it is unlikely an add/reno will be possible. Studying the existing building is part of the project analysis.

Jane Colino (Director of Senior Services) noted members of the following committees were in attendance:

- Representative members of the Council on Aging and Advisory Board Representative members of the EBC and ABC
- City Councilor Lyle Baker and wife Sally
- Nancy Scammon, Parks and Rec program coordinator and Ilana Seidmann, Senior Services program coordinator

How many attendees have attended programs at the senior center?

Approximately 2/3 of those in attendance raised their hands.

NewCAL stands for Newton Center for Active Living – working name for the project

If you were to encourage someone to go to the Newton Senior Center, what would you say?

Reason #01 parking sticker, free flu shots, variety of programs that meet people's needs and cultural interests, lunch/food, volunteer opportunities, great staff and great variety of programs, can borrow lightly used medical equipment, resources/answers to questions, socialize and meeting new people through volunteer opportunities, topics to address some of the things may be thinking about currently or may think about in the future, medical insurance advice (SHINE counseling), public access computers/computer lessons, exercise classes, support groups (Parkinsons, clutter support, care giver, bereavement, low vision), language classes, sharing talents, gardening, learning games and places to play games, friendly and crowded.

Areas where there is room for improvement?

Inadequate, limited exercise space, very congested

Store could be larger or more permanent

More parking

More staff

Improved, safer facilities

Sound system (currently there is no sound system)

Assisted listening devices

More handicapped accessible building

Audio loop which is a piece of technology that loops around a room which improves hearing for everybody

There are collection boxes at the Senior Center (collect glasses on behalf of the Lions Club), take mercury button batteries from hearing aids (to protect environment), collect food for Newton food pantries

Furniture was donated and is second hand. Newer more contemporary furnishings would make the spaces more attractive and lovely. The current senior center is more of a "hand me down" place.

Would like facility to look like the Natick senior center - newer, more modern.

Improved space for the senior orchestra. Currently there is a swing band and a chamber ensemble group.

Tai Chi center. Two video cameras (one showing instructor from front and one from back).

Zoned heating system so some rooms can be kept comfortably warm and other rooms, such as exercise, can be kept cooler/safer. City noted that HVAC system would need to be able to respond to varying levels of occupancy and use in multi-purpose spaces.

Extended hours and/or weekend hours?

Lighting is important

Meeting room space for up to 10 people for smaller groups (book clubs, or impromptu gatherings)

Easy to move partitions and furnishings to easily create multi-purpose spaces

Community gardening opportunities; to be used in meal preparation

Connecting volunteers to help with services that don't cost a lot, improved way to recommend (i.e. snow shoveling).

As part of the visits to other senior centers, it is important to listen to complaints. Success or non-success isn't always about the building, sometimes it is about the attitudes of the people that work in the facility.

Consideration of other City senior services

Rooftop garden where space is limited - Needham has raised beds on a roof top – LaSalle Village has a roof top garden.

Multi-function building with a senior center and senior housing. Any senior center will need funding support. Condo support would go towards the Senior Center.

Adult day care. Current center does not have adult day health care services that people can access within their own community.

Need more technology is needed to connect people and services.

Like to go to the library. Always art exhibits. Community display. Can live a public life in the library. Common space where people just go to hang out. Senior Center is ugly and very tight. Physical space needs to have flexibility. Exhibit space important to make space feel alive. Comfortable place. Un-programmed natural serendipitous spaces are important.

Want to have a community place; a senior center is a really vital place. Housing options are incredibly important. A center that generates community would help seniors to stay in Newton. Would love to see a vibrant community center. If not in Newton, then where else?

Live in Oak Hill Park, started as an area with small houses for WWII veterans. When sold, the small houses are torn down and McMansions are built. Need more single family homes which would allow seniors to be able to stay in their own homes with the support to have an active life style.

Bedford assisted living facility has pet services.

Themed program (such as ice cream of the month)

Community – volunteer matching system – Village Movement (started on Beacon Hill about 10-15 years ago). Newton has Newton at Home. There isn't a municipal model yet.

Newton has over 20,000 seniors. 6th largest senior community in MA.

YMCA has space, could possibly help out. The executive director has been involved with this process.

Fitness Center. All (3) that the NewCAL project team visited has fitness facilities.

Lots of light and lots of windows. Current building is an old library. Most windows start 6' above the floor.

Online Resources

Senior Center has a website: www.newtonseniors.org

An organization called "Help Around Town" – electronic platform to help make connection.

"Nextdoor Newton" is a helpful online site to reach out to the community for help with services.

Would you be interested in participating in activities in different facilities around the City?

In the 1980's, the Newton Community Education committee was charged with consolidating activities which were previously dispersed throughout the City, to primarily two locations: Newton North and Newton South.

Assumption that all seniors drive? Programs distributed out the City is a wonderful idea if you drive. Hand in hand with dependable transportation and parking.

In Waban, community library (WLS) is used as community space. Has yoga classes, pre-school programs. Has accessibility and the T for transportation.

Distributed approach. Partnerships with other organizations in the City to take advantage of facilities that we don't have, such as the YMCA and the JCC. Look at valuable space in the City that may be under-utilized.

Senior focused or multi-generational?

Concerned that if the new facility is not a home just for seniors, seniors may not have a dedicated space and may feel pushed out.

If multi-generational, could be open from 6:00AM to 11:00PM. If facility is open far more hours than the current center, could be multi-generational. If seniors are pushed out, the project is a

loss. Should be some programs designed for people with limited mobility and designed for seniors with thoughtful, specific program designs.

Background noise can bother you when you are older. Need chairs with arms. Lighting to be considered. 30% of the Newton population is 60 years and over. Need to give something back to this very large and fast growing population. Need to build a facility for older bodies. Concern that this will be a community center over taken by the young residents. If the City wants to keep older Newtonites in Newton, need to provide a dedicated space.

City noted doesn't need to be one or the other. When designing a building that is good for older people, it is good for everyone.

Is there anything that would make NewCAL facility successful in the future?

The building entry needs to be well lit and well protected from weather with a covered drop off area.

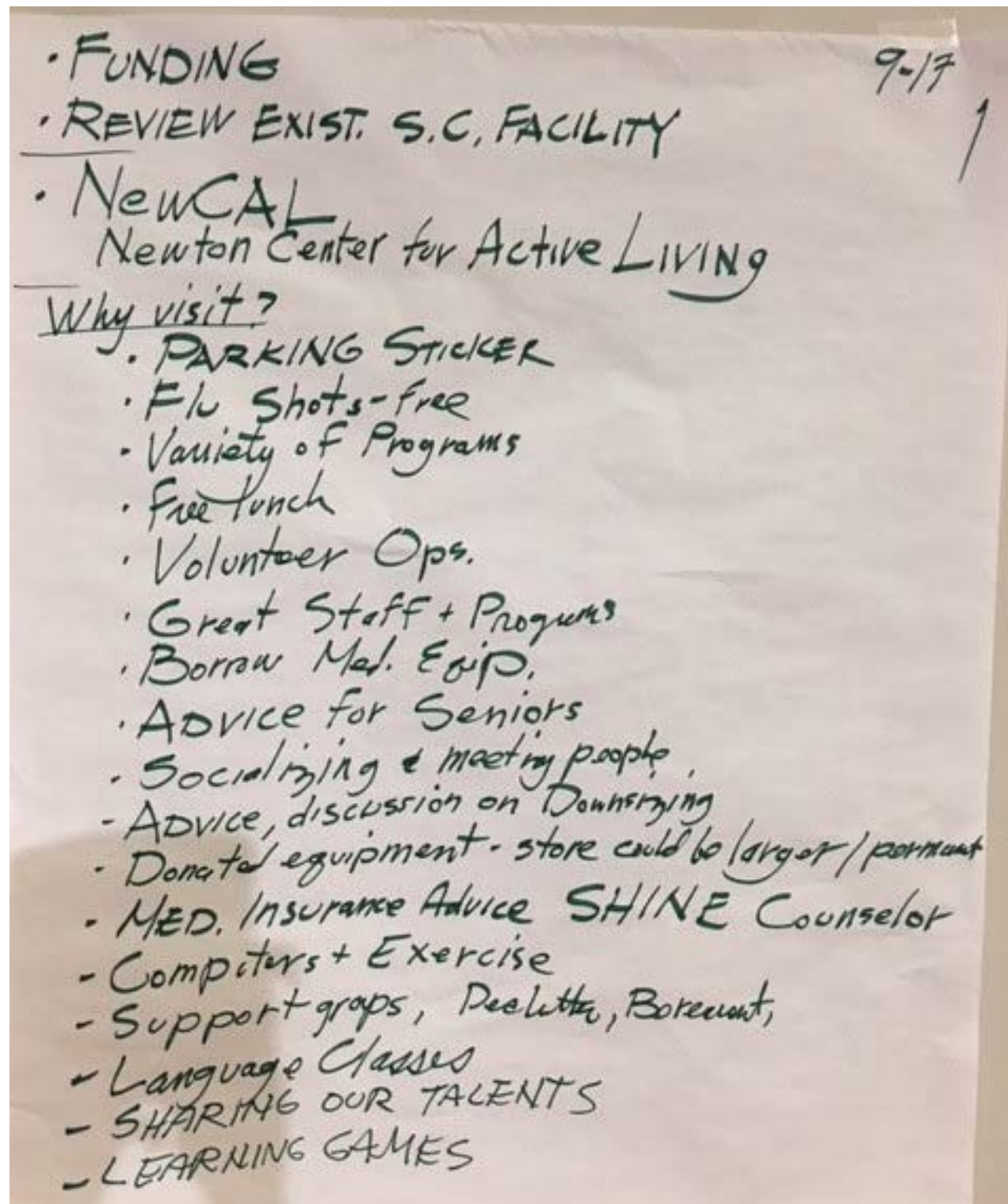
Large print signage.

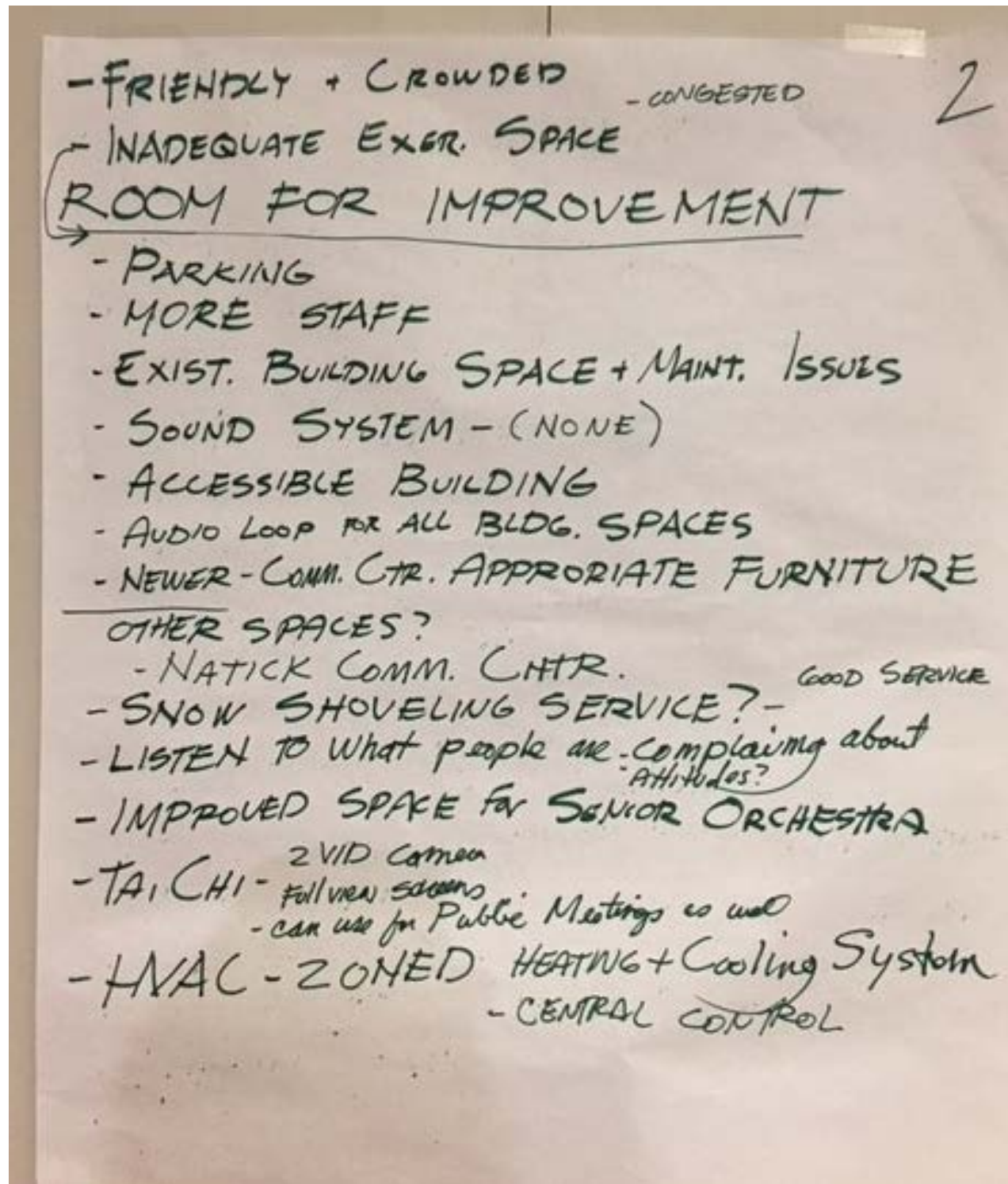
More men's programming. Special event scheduled at Newton North with a speaker from the senior center, speaking on artificial intelligence.

Have lived in Newton since 1962. Priorities in the City are for schools and feels there is a growing resentment that lots of money has been put into the younger generation. It has to be acknowledged that there is an emotional aspect as to what is next.

Landscaping around the current senior center is exceptional. Make sure the beautiful landscaping is maintained. Known as the "park at the senior center." Outdoor beauty comes to us from the Senior Fund.

Ruthanne Fuller one of her major campaign issues is to improve the services to the senior community. Newton has been designated as an age friendly community by the World Health Organization. A big part is respect and inclusion.





- EXTENDED HRS. + WKND'S.
 - LIGHTING - GLARE
PROPER SCENE CONTROL
 - MEETING RMS - UP TO 10 PEOPLE
 - IMPROMPTU SPACES
 - EASILY MOVED PARTITIONS FOR MULTI-PURPOSE ROOMS
 - COORD. WITH OTHER COA & CITY SENIOR SERVICES
 - Community Gardening - Greenhouse?
 - Rooftop Gardening
 - Raised Beds
 - HOUSING - SC. + APTS ABOVE
CONDOS - 4-5 STORIES
JOBS PURCHASE COST → \$ → Senior Center
 - LaSalle Village
 - SENIORS WANT TO STAY IN THE COMMUNITY
 - HOUSING OPTIONS - IMPORTANT
 - smaller - down sized units
 - Community Center integrated w/ housing
 - HOUSING OPTIONS - COA
- Why NOT VISIT - Why have you not visited?
- MANSIONIZATION impacting seniors
- ADULT DAY SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
 - LIBRARY
 - ART
 - ROOMS FOR CHILDREN
 - COMMON SPACE
 - RICH VARIETY OF COMMUNAL SPACES
 - FLEXIBLE SPACE
 - FEELS ALIVE
 - MAGNET FOR COMMUNITY

- UNPROGRAMMED SERENDIPITOUS SPACE
- BEDFORD - CARLTON WILLARD
 - PET SITTING SERVICES
 - THEMED Programs - ice cream of the month!
- Community volunteer & info exchange
 - Village Movement - Beacon Hill
 - Wolkeley
 - Newton At Home
- NF. Library - great web site
 - membership dues -
 - village based
- NEWTON SENIORS . ORG
 - ask for help? • "Help Around Town".com
 - "NEXT DOOR NEWTON".com
 - ANGIE'S LIST
- YMCA - COORDINATE SERVICES
 - MODERN FITNESS EQUIPMENT
 - NATURAL LIGHT, WELL LIT SPACES
 - VISIBILITY TO THE STREET/OUTDOORS.
- WE HAVE THE BEST SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR IN THE STATE!

