

MAYNARD TOWN MEETING CITIZEN PETITION:

RECOMMEND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FROM FREE CASH FOR A LARGER MAYNARD SENIOR CENTER

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from free cash the sum of up to \$120,000 per year, beginning with FY24, for a minimum of five (5) years, to provide a leased facility appropriate for an expanded and more accessible Maynard Senior Center. To do or act thereon.

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COMMENTS FROM SPONSOR:

The Maynard Senior Center provides valuable services and programs for the senior residents of our town. However, the present facility is inadequate for even the current needs of a senior population, the fastest growing segment in our community. We are therefore asking the Town to allocate from free cash up to \$120,000 per fiscal year for a minimum of five (5) years to lease a larger space, allowing the relocation of the senior center to meet growing program demand. This will greatly improve the quality of life and well-being of our senior community.

Housed at the rear of the town-owned Maynard Golf Course clubhouse, our current senior center is too small for the 3,000 seniors (age 60+) in town, who number almost one-third of the town's population. Lack of space in the senior center leads to an inability to provide concurrent programs or services, such as exercise sessions, educational and recreational programs, crafts, social activities, and meals. Private counseling space is not available for confidential discussions between COA staff and senior residents. Personal counseling services are a critical component of the COA program, providing aid and services for financial, health, insurance, tax, and other personal needs and issues.

Per recent guidance from the Finance Committee: a lease is the best and most sustainable way the town can meet the need for a larger senior center. Leasing can provide an adequate space without the need for a large capital outlay. Leasing makes the most fiscal sense; there is no need for maintenance, upkeep, or custodial services. It is a model that has proven very successful for the town of Acton.

The Town of Maynard's Master Plan of 2020, in the Public Facilities and Services portion of the report, recommended in Goal PFS5 to "support expanded services for the Town's senior population and provide the appropriate facilities to accommodate them". The Town has committed to certain goals that mirror the needs of the Maynard community. Thus, we urge the Town to take timely action to fulfill these promises. This is a reasonable request, as we are only asking the Town to act on a targeted need that was identified and acknowledged many years ago.