

COA DIRECTOR'S SENIOR CENTER SPACE SEARCH UPDATE TO THE MAYNARD SELECT BOARD, JUNE 15, 2021. VIEWABLE VIA THE TOWN OF MAYNARD YOUTUBE PLATFORM.

"Thank you for your invitation to me to discuss the search for a new space for the Senior Center.

The Council On Aging relocated to a renovated space in the Golf Course building in January of 2015. Prior to this, the COA was in a small office space in the Mill & Main complex for 10 – 15 years. The COA's new location offered an opportunity to provide a wide array programs and activities addressing the physical, educational, and social needs of Maynard's seniors. Almost immediately, the number of enthusiastic participants in classes and activities were effected by the limits of the space. Second sessions of the same class were added to accommodate participants. Limits had to be placed on the number of participants in a room for certain programs. And of course there were limits in the ability to expand programs and difficulty holding more than two activities simultaneously.

Of greater concern than the space limitations, is the physically challenging access to the building which creates serious risks during inclement weather. There isn't any way to modify or eliminate this problem.

Over the last six years, starting immediately after the COA relocated, the search for an appropriate space continued. Shared space, options to purchase and renovate, and any leasable space were discussed. These included, but were not limited to:

Shared space opportunities:

- with Open Table at their downtown location
- within the Congregational Church space which has become the Sanctuary
- with the Assabet Valley Boys & Girls Club during the two previous directors' tenures

Purchase or lease options:

- the Gruber's building
- former Currier & Chives building, now Greenstar

Renovation:

- the Coolidge school

Late last fall/prior to the shutdown due to the pandemic, Armand introduced me to the leasing management at Mill & Main. During this past year, a space was proposed in a lower-level building. It was evaluated by the COA board, COA staff and the TA. The COA board felt the space is more than sufficient to expand of programs and attendees, but more importantly, it met their priorities of having appropriate accessibility, parking and being located as close to near downtown Maynard. The COA board felt the initial proposal might be cost prohibitive.

Lincoln properties also manages the building at 141 Parker street (the former Digital Credit Union) and I have asked that if multiple suites became available on one floor to let us know immediately. This could create an opportunity for a temporary space but the building is currently at full occupancy.

As well, the Boys And Girls Club was re-evaluated. While with great accessibility, parking and being close to the schools and downtown, the COA's hours of operation would be significantly reduced, including no access to use of the facility for 11 weeks during the summer, four vacation weeks, and multiple early release days. Nonetheless, the newly renovated gym offers a great venue for programs and events that a great number of seniors could attend than at the current COA.

I am asking for the Select Board to direct the COA Board, in conjunction with the COA Director and Town Administrator, to continue to pursue opportunities for spaces that meet the programming needs of the senior population.

The next steps in this process include:

Near Term:

The COA board, with the COA director will continue to evaluate multi-use, leasable and shared space opportunities. (The COA board has prioritized accessibility, parking, room to expand and proximity to downtown Maynard.)

The COA director will pursue use of community venues such as the Boys & Girls Club gym and the Maynard Elk's hall as means to expand programs and accommodate a larger group of attendees

The COA board, with the COA Director, will evaluate the effect of an increase in the Principal Clerk's hours to support extending the COA's hours. The COA board, with the COA Director, will make recommendations through the budget development process.

The COA board, with the COA director, will consider the creation of an ad hoc committee to survey seniors and the community's interests in a senior or community.

Longer-term steps include:

An established facility with appropriate access, sufficient parking, and space to continue expand programs and events.

I welcome your questions and input.”

(end of update)

Amy Loveless
Maynard Council On Aging Director