

*Public Hearing*  
*Thursday, June 12, 2008*  
*CRHS, Auditorium*

Minutes

Laura Francis opening the meeting led with the pledge of allegiance and read the following call:

TOWN OF DURHAM  
PUBLIC HEARING  
7:00 P.M., THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2008  
JULIAN B. THAYER AUDITORIUM, COGINCHAUG REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

The purpose of this public hearing is to present information on referendum to be held on Tuesday, July 1, 2008 for the following question:

“Shall the Town purchase the property known as 239 and 247R Meetinghouse Hill Road at a cost not to exceed \$395,000 and authorize the Board of Selectmen to pay for the property from Fund #45 Community/Senior Center Project and to do all other things necessary and proper to complete the transaction.”

All are encouraged to attend. This hearing is accessible to the handicapped.

Any disabled persons requiring special assistance or non-English speaking persons should contact Laura Francis, First Selectman at 860-349-3625 at least five days prior to the hearing.

L. Francis then conducted a PowerPoint presentation that included the following information:

History

- 1998 Senior Citizens Advisory Board Formed
- Senior Center Site sub-committee formed shortly thereafter
- 2001 Board of Finance established reserve fund for a Community Center renamed in FY 04-05 as Community/Senior Center Reserve Fund
- 2002 ordinance passed creating the Durham Senior Citizens Board as a permanent Town commission

Site Selection History

- All Town Owned Property was investigated and considered unsuitable for a number of valid reasons
- 14 Private Properties Investigated and found to be unsuitable
- 2 other inquiries made with no reply from landowners
- Overall 19 site walks conducted and at least one rental property considered

Site Selection Criteria

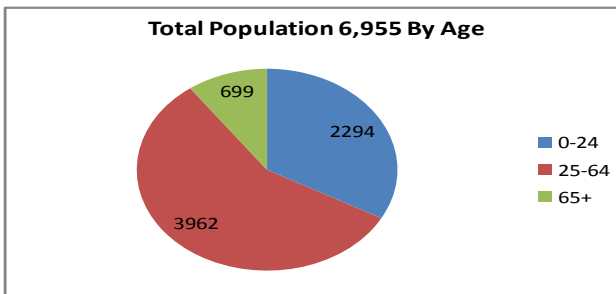
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RECEIVED: 6-17-08	TIME: 4:40 PM
Kim Garvis, Town Clerk	
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK, DURHAM, CONNECTICUT	

## Reserve Fund History

		Appropriation	Expenditures	Balance
FY 01-02	Community Center	50,000	0	50,000
FY 02-03	Community Center	100,000	0	150,000
FY 03-04	Community Center	45,000	0	195,000
FY 04-05	Community/Senior Center	50,000	0	245,000
FY 05-06	Community/Senior Center	0	0	245,000
FY 06-07	Community/Senior Center	25,000	0	270,000
FY 07-08	Community/Senior Center	40,000	0	310,000
FY 08-09	Community/Senior Center	0	0	310,000

## 2007 Town Demographics



## Senior Programming

### Location Sites

1. Durham Public Library
2. Durham Volunteer Firehouse
3. Durham Town Hall
4. Strong Middle School
5. United Churches Fellowship Hall
6. EOC - Durham Fairgrounds
7. Notre Dame Church Hall
8. Rod & Gun Club
9. Korn School

### Exercise Classes

Bingo

Art Classes

Card Games

Special Events

Holiday Parties

Health Clinics - Foot Care, Flu Shots Hearing Tests

Health Fair

Financial Counseling

Medical & Recreational Transportation

Driver Refresher Classes

Cooking Classes

Lunch Program

### Community Organizations

- Boy/Girl Scouts
- Sport Organizations
- Women's Club
- Garden Club
- 60+ Club
- Boards/Commissions
- Book Clubs
- Recreation Programs
- Bridge Clubs
- Dance Classes
- Lion's Club
- Exchange Club
- Town Committees
- Educational Opportunities
- Health Fairs
- Special Events
- And More.....

### Proposed Site

239 and 247R Meetinghouse Hill Road

Owner: Cuomo Construction, Inc.

6.99 acres

\$395,000

- Appraised at \$200,000 for each lot dated 11-27-07
- Sec. 8-24 review was favorable from Planning & Zoning Commission 6-4-08
- Sale subject to referendum vote
- Environmental Review Underway
- Site cleared and perk test data available
- Met Site Committee criteria

### Future Planning

- Public Safety Facility Committee
  - Appoint a Committee that will create building plans for an enhanced Public Safety facility to include plans for the renovation of the 2 town-owned houses adjacent to Firehouse
- Senior/Community Center Committee
  - Appoint a Committee that will create building plans for a Senior/Community Center
- Grant Committee
  - Appoint a Committee that will research grant opportunities and work with Town Hall staff and building committees with the grant application process

L. Francis then opening the meeting up for discussion.

Lainey Melvin, Co-Chairman of the Senior Citizen Committee, congratulated the committee on a job well done and commented on the great experience she shared with them. She stated she felt this was a wonderful opportunity for the community and the prospect of an intergenerational facility was wonderful and asked for everyone's support.

Bob Schulte asked about the \$310,000 set aside for a senior center and how would this play into a combination center? L. Francis stated the reserve account was originally set up as a community center fund and was then renamed as a Community Center/Senior Center as a designated reserve fund until the Board of Finance re-designates it.

Carol Kleeman asked how the difference between the asking price and the reserve fund was going to be paid. L. Francis stated the difference was to be paid out of the undesignated reserve.

Mary DiMella stated the first meeting of the Senior Board was in 1997 and their primary concern was a senior center. She commented the seniors of Durham are long term taxpayers, support local businesses and contribute by volunteering; 75% of Durham's tax dollar goes to the school system. She continued by saying if the town loses it's seniors it would make sense that younger families would move here adding to the school system; this would be more expensive than keeping seniors happy.

Renee Edwards asked of the seven acres how much of the land would be allotted for seniors, how much land would be unusable, and how much land would be left over? L. Francis stated this was not known yet; she did know there was a small amount of wetlands at the back of the property in the form of a brook. She did say there was a potential of adding (2) bays to house/store emergency vehicles at this facility.

R. Edwards stated she gives her support to this purchase and believes it should go to referendum. As a member of the Board of Selectmen for six years she has seen the continuous process of the Senior Committee and believes they have looked long and hard; she feels the town is responsible to take care of the needs of its seniors as we do our children and it is the towns moral obligation to bring seniors what they need. She concluded by saying because of the size of the property she feels it should be maximized to include other needs as well.

Bob Melvin commented the property consisted of 2 household lots, 4 bedroom approved; at \$12,000 per child the total educational cost for the 2 households would total \$72,000. He feels the town is not going to get property cheaper and feels this is a very conservative purchase. He lends his support.

L. Francis commented she attended a State of CT, Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) workshop and stated the town cannot receive grant money until we can proceed with a project. She posed the question of how taking this property off the market would impact the town; answering that it will reduce the education cost by preventing residential use.

Henry Coe thanked the current Board of Selectmen along with the last two administrations for their support and site walks over the years. He said originally the committee was dead set on just a senior center but when they started to go out and visit other centers and saw the interaction of seniors with younger children, they changed their minds. He stated for the record that he supports the purchase of the property.

David Montgomery shared his feelings about recognizing since 1940 the premium on youth spent while discarding the seniors. He also has some issues with an intergeneration mix and finds an emergency building combined with a senior center bothersome. He referred to Main Street properties that were bought for emergency services use and it appeared to him that plans were shifting. He was disappointed that specific plans were not in place. L. Francis responded that we know we need approximately 4,000 - 5,000 square feet for a senior center, we know what kinds of activities that we would like to hold, and know what attributes of the building we want; what we don't have is a building plan. She continued to say the Main Street property is still a priority and the Board of Selectmen would like to seek grant funding for both projects and bond for both at the same time, recognizing there are urgent needs on the public safety side.

Bob Melvin stated he felt the town has nothing to lose with little risk and a lot to gain. The property could always be put back on the market. He referred to property adjacent to the Durham Library that was a missed opportunity.

Richard Parmelee thanked the Board of Selectmen and the Senior Board. He felt the seniors were being neglected and have left town because there is no housing. He stated as a community we need to do more than fund the education system and establish priorities; seniors should not be using the

firehouse or ambulance corps facilities. He finished by stating he thought this was a good deal and the town could always sell the property at a later date if need be.

Scott Wright stated over the last 10 years the Ambulance Corps has been promised a new facility and stressed that they cannot continue to provide services in the facility they are in. He expressed his approval of the potential of a new facility at the firehouse and the addition of housing an ambulance at Meetinghouse Hill Road. He appreciated working with the Senior Board and looks forward to working with the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and the Senior Board in the future.

L. Francis commented about the seriousness of the accidents over the last three weeks with two fatalities and one critically injured person and the toll it takes on the towns volunteer personnel. S. Wright stated in the first two weeks of June the Ambulance Corps was called out 24 times; 8 being serious in nature.

L. Francis thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the public hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Beth Moncata