



Senior Study Committee

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March 24, 2009

To Town Meeting Members:

Please find enclosed information compiled by the Senior Study Committee on the proposed **Senior Center**. Article 20 at Annual Town Meeting will include a Motion to appropriate \$600,000 to develop a detailed design and prepare construction documents for the construction of a free-standing Senior Center. Town Meeting will be taking up Article 20 as the first order of business on Monday, April 6th.

In January 2007, the Board of Selectmen, in collaboration with the Wellesley Council on Aging, appointed the *Senior Study Committee* to evaluate how the Town can best meet the evolving needs of Wellesley's senior residents. Since then, we have learned a great deal about senior support in Wellesley and have concluded that a significant investment is warranted at this time. Our commitment and support of our senior residents is of paramount importance and requires investment for effective and efficient delivery of services and programs.

The information in this packet provides background on the project, information on senior support in Wellesley, and the initial project scope for a free-standing Senior Center.

Additionally, the Council on Aging invites all Town Meeting Members to visit the Council on Aging offices and Senior Room on **Saturday, March 28th**, **anytime between 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.**, for an informal tour of the current space and discussion of senior support in Wellesley today.

We look forward to sharing the details of this project at Town Meeting and encourage you to review the enclosed information.

Sincerely,

Harriet Warshaw
Chair, Senior Study Committee

SENIOR CENTER FACT SHEET

Article 20, Motion 2: To approve an appropriation of \$600,000 to develop a detailed building design and prepare construction documents for the construction of a free-standing Senior Center.

PROPOSAL

The project proposal is for a 12,440 square foot, two-story facility to be built at 496 Washington Street (currently, the site of the American Legion building). The facility would be a free-standing Senior Center dedicated to providing programs and services to the senior population of Wellesley (ages 60+). There are several motions anticipated under Article 20. Motion 2 will request funds for detailed design development, permitting and preparation of construction documents. The total project cost will be proposed to Town Meeting when finalized.

The request will fund the following: The development of schematic designs and construction documents to enable bidding for the total construction costs of the project. A full accounting of what the \$600,000 request will cover is provided on page 8 of this packet.

BACKGROUND

Senior support can be divided into two categories: Programs and Services. *Programs* include a wide diversity of courses, meetings, seminars and gatherings designed for social interaction, skills-based learning, wellness and health management, and education. *Services* include information and referrals concerning issues of health, housing, health insurance, in-home assistance, and legal matters. It is important for both of these categories to be strong and sustainable to foster community health and wellness.

There is currently no "Senior Center" in Wellesley. *Senior support* in Wellesley is managed by the Council on Aging (COA), a Town Department. The COA manages an operating budget of approximately \$220,000 per year (0.2% of the Town budget, approximately \$41 per senior resident) with no capital expenses. The Town pays \$23,100 per year in rent to the Wellesley Community Center (WCC), a nonprofit, privately held and managed facility, for office and function space.¹ Programs and services are offered on a limited basis and subject to space availability. Currently, the COA has one room in the basement of the WCC that is dedicated for senior programs.

In late 2005, the Town was informed that Mary Esther "Billie" Tolles had made a bequest of \$825,000 to the Town of Wellesley. The bequest specified that these funds would be used to found, construct and equip a free-standing Senior Center in Wellesley. This bequest prompted a review of the current facility and services.

In January 2007, the *Senior Study Committee* (SSC) was appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Their mission has been to evaluate how the Town can best meet the evolving needs of Wellesley's senior population.

From January to November 2007, the SSC held multiple discussions with Wellesley Community Center representatives to explore possible renovation and expansion; multiple options were developed and presented. Prior to 2008 Annual Town Meeting, the SSC presented a plan and architectural rendering of proposed renovations that would have provided designated space at the WCC site. An agreement was not reached in part because the WCC was

¹ The Wellesley Community Center (WCC) was established in 1977 as an independent, self-supporting corporation. Meeting space is free of charge for Wellesley youth groups' and senior citizens' activities while other Wellesley civic groups are charged at a subsidized rate. Other room rental fees are set at a market-competitive rate. The Wellesley Community Center is governed by a Board of Directors from the community. (Source: www.wellesleycommunityctr.org.) The Wellesley Community Center is owner and manager of the facility which is situated on private property owned by the Wellesley Friendly Aid Association.

unable to provide adequate assurances regarding the availability of the renovated spaces. The WCC remains firm in the position that space cannot be assured for senior support outside of the WCC standard policies for reserving space. Development of a Senior Center-type facility within the existing WCC would not be feasible without confirmed and accessible space.

Further complicating this option is that there are significant issues and costs associated with renovation and expansion of the WCC specifically with regard to ADA compliance. A renovation or addition would trigger the need for the entire facility to be renovated to meet current code regulations.

Therefore, after exploring opportunities to develop a Senior Center within the WCC facility, this option was eliminated. The Senior Study Committee prepared to review other alternatives and requested funds from the Town to conduct more comprehensive research.

In April 2008, Town Meeting authorized \$50,000 to study the feasibility of constructing a free-standing Senior Center on the former American Legion site (\$25,000 from the Town and \$25,000 from the Tolles bequest). Additionally, the COA and the Senior Study Committee initiated a further review of senior support in Wellesley and opportunities for improvement. The review consisted of focus groups, interviews, surveys and benchmarking.

The results of the senior support review were used to outline the Senior Center *Facility Requirements*. In brief, the level of senior support in Wellesley is lower than that of neighboring towns; programs are difficult to coordinate and confirm given the space constraints; dedicated space is extremely small impacting the number and types of programs that can be offered and delivered; and physical access to programs and offices is limited.

Based on these findings, the Senior Study Committee concluded the following:

1. In order to age well, individuals need to maintain an active, healthy, and socially engaged lifestyle. In today's economic environment it becomes even more necessary to provide adequate and functional programs and services to our senior population, one of the more vulnerable segments of society in this challenging financial landscape.
2. The quality, size, accessibility and availability of facilities impact a town's ability to provide senior support. Successful senior support is provided in dedicated space, *a Senior Center*. Senior Centers are attractive, welcoming environments that flexibly support concurrent activities. Accessibility is vital and the opportunity for social interaction is essential.
3. Communities that have invested in a new or renovated dedicated Senior Center have seen a significant increase in participation, including senior volunteers, to support an expanded program.

In September 2008, the Senior Study Committee hired the architectural firm Sterling Associates of Cambridge to conduct a Feasibility Study. Sterling Associates utilized the *Facility Requirements* summary (*see page 6*) as the basis for the development of the *Space Requirements* (*see page 6*), a detailed description of programs and services to be offered at the Senior Center, and the corresponding size, type and number of spaces. The Feasibility Study included a needs analysis, review of program plan and space requirements, options review (site and parking), estimated operating budget and preliminary floor plans.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What are the limitations of the current facility?

There are significant limitations in the current facility: Presently, the COA cannot run concurrent activities due to lack of guaranteed and dedicated meeting space. In addition, the temporary availability of each space requires significant setup and takedown work for each event. This limits the number, timing and type of programs offered. *Additionally, the space limits spontaneous social interaction, a key component of a strong senior center.* There is not a central location for meeting or socialization when an activity ends. The COA has one under-sized room designated for programs (in the basement with limited accessibility) and has the option to utilize other rooms in the Community Center when available.

2. How would the proposed Senior Center be different?

A free-standing Senior Center will enable the effective and efficient delivery of senior support in Wellesley. The current list of programs and services would continue to be offered and expanded, and the facility would vastly improve the delivery and efficacy of our senior support (see *page 5* for the March 2009 program offerings). A free-standing center would provide: Multiple, dedicated rooms enabling concurrent programs; a central space for social interaction; meeting room facilities for presentations; adjacent storage areas to allow flexible utilization of each space and an area for eating. It would also enable the programs and services to be delivered on a broader scale and more effectively so that the defined goals of senior support in Wellesley can be met.

In 2008, a program review was conducted and a complete list and nature of spaces required to effectively deliver the programs and services was developed (see *page 6*). These *Space Requirements* provided the information needed to develop the preliminary Fit Test floor plans.

3. What is the expected usage?

Over 21% of Wellesley residents are age 60+ (approximately 5,330 people) and this is expected to grow to over 32% by 2030. A benchmark for senior support usage in Massachusetts is approximately 20 - 25% of the eligible population. Currently, approximately 17% of Wellesley seniors use the senior services and programs. These usage and participation rates are well below those of neighboring towns. Towns which have opened a dedicated facility for senior support have found usage and participation rates increase dramatically.

4. Wouldn't the Warren Building be a good alternative for Senior Center use?

Availability of adequate space would be difficult to assure on a regular basis and therefore, use of Warren space would not address the issue of dedicated space for senior support. A *Senior Center* must be considered very distinct from a series of course offerings; programs and services in temporary and/or shifting locations does not enable effective support or provide for the key goal of community and social interaction within a Senior Center. Further, there are significant zoning restrictions and parking limitations which make the Warren facility unfeasible as a Senior Center.

5. What will be the incremental increase in the operating cost of the new Senior Center?

The incremental operating costs, including provisions for a custodian and utility/maintenance costs are estimated to total \$42,900 per year. Senior Center programs are largely self-funding. See *page 9* for more details.

6. What is the total estimated project cost?

The estimated cost for development of schematic designs, permitting and construction documents is \$600,000. The total estimated project cost will be provided at Town Meeting and will be inclusive of the \$600,000 appropriation. A detailed financial report on the project will be provided when full funding is requested.

7. How will this be funded?

Article 20, Motion 2 (schematic design development and site preparation) provides for funding from the Town in the FY10 operating budget. The funding for construction of the building will be reviewed and voted on at a subsequent Town Meeting.

8. Will there be any private fundraising to offset any of the project costs?

Because of the generous bequest of Billie Tolles the senior center project is in the unique and fortunate position to have an initial private commitment of funds of \$800,000 (the \$825,000 bequest less the \$25,000 used to fund the

Feasibility Study). It is the intent of the Selectmen in collaboration with the COA to create a fundraising plan to help fund enhancements to the building including amenities, some technology and additional furnishings -- all items which will not be included in the project cost. At this point, a private fundraising goal has not been established. However, it is expected that specific goals and further information on private fundraising will be provided when an appropriation for the cost of construction is sought from Town Meeting.

9. What would happen to the Tolles bequest if Article 20, Motion 2 is not approved?

The Trustees of the Tolles estate have informed the town of their legal responsibility to distribute the bequest as promptly as possible; three years have elapsed since the Town was notified of the bequest. Significant delay jeopardizes the certainty of the availability of the bequest in the future.

10. What would happen to the project if Article 20, Motion 2 is not approved?

In addition to the potential loss of the Tolles bequest, failure to approve the funding for schematic designs and construction documents would mean the project would not move forward. Since this project reflects the recommendation of the Senior Study Committee based on two years of research and study, it would be the decision of the Board of Selectmen on how to proceed, likely deferring action for at least another year.

11. The name of the proposed center has been noted as "*The Tolles-Parsons Senior Center.*" Has this already been decided?

A condition of the Tolles bequest is that name of the center be "*The Tolles-Parsons Senior Center.*" The acceptance of the bequest and the official naming of the building require Town Meeting majority approval and are the subject of Article 20, Motion 3 (*see page 11*). Motion 3 will be moved forward if the funding is approved under Motion 2.

12. Given the current economic environment, can this project wait?

See *page 10* for a discussion of the importance of moving forward on the Senior Center Building Project this year.

SENIOR CENTER

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Site Selection

The site for the proposed free-standing Senior Center is located at 496 Washington Street (currently, the site of the American Legion building). This site offers significant advantages, as it:

- Is under the auspices of the Board of Selectmen;
- Is centrally located in the "heart" of Wellesley;
- Is conveniently situated between the high school and middle school facilitating intergenerational programming and activities;
- Is across the street from senior housing;
- Is in close proximity to the main library;
- Provides pedestrian access; and
- Will accommodate 90% of space needs.

There are limitations to the site which will be addressed: Programs will be offered on two levels; the egress is onto a busy street (Washington Street); on-street parking will likely be needed; and there is limited potential for expansion of the footprint. Because of this latter point, the project plan includes a basement, though it will not be completely finished, enabling expansion in the future.

B. Programming

The Facility Requirements were developed after a thorough review of all findings to date, including the results of focus groups, interviews, surveys and benchmarking. Additional input from the Director of Senior Services, the COA Board and Study Committee was used to develop the requirements.

1. Current Programming

A typical month of programming at the Council on Aging is noted here in the monthly calendar. The majority of the programs and services take place in one room requiring set-up and break-down before and after each activity and the inability to offer concurrent programs.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 10 ____ Walking Group (LIB) 11:30 ____ Bridge (Beg) Lesson 11:45 ____ Lunch: Aloha Chicken Breast 12:30 ____ Bridge (Beg Play) 1-3 ____ Fine Arts (Warren)	3 10-11 ____ Yoga 1 11:15-12:15 Yoga 2 11:45 ____ Lunch: Roast Turkey 1-4 ____ Mah Jong 1:30-2:30 ____ Keep Well Clinic: Weston Rd	4 9:30 ____ Community Service Bears 10-12 ____ Spanish (Make-up) 11:45 ____ Lunch: Stuffed Shells/Meatball 12-1 ____ Keep Well Clinic (COA) 2-4 ____ Comp. Inst. By Appt	5 9:30 ____ Book Discussion 10-12 ____ Investment Club 11:45 ____ Lunch: Pork Rib/Greavy 12:45-4 ____ Bridge (Adv) 1-4 ____ Mah Jong 1-3 ____ Outreach Office Hours	6 10-12 ____ Comp Inst. by Appt. 11:45 ____ Lunch: Crab stuffed Fish 12:45 ____ Movie: "WALLE"
9 10 ____ Walking Group (LIB) 11-12 ____ Balance Class 11:30 ____ Bridge (Beg Lesson) 11:45 ____ Lunch: Chicken Quarter 12:30 ____ Bridge (Beg Play) 1-3 ____ Fine Arts (Warren)	10 10-11:15 ____ German 10-11 ____ Yoga 1 11:15-12:15 Yoga 2 11:30-12:15 Office Hours/Brown 11:45 ____ Lunch: Stuffed Cabbage 1-3 ____ "The Beauty of Your Being"	11 9:30 ____ Community Service Bears 10 ____ Spanish (Beg) 10-12:30 Sr. Ctr. Workshop 11 ____ Spanish (Int) 11-12 ____ NO Balance Class 11:45 ____ Lunch: Hot Dog/Baked Beans 2-4 ____ Comp. Inst. By Appt	12 9:30-10:30 Balance Class 10-12 ____ Investment Club 11:45 ____ Lunch: Pier 17 Fish 12:45-4 ____ Bridge (Adv) 1-4 ____ Mah Jong 1-3 ____ Outreach Office Hours	13 10-11 ____ "Retirement Income Security" 10-12 ____ Computer Inst. by Appt. 11:45 ____ Lunch: Macaroni Cheese 12:45 ____ Movie: "W"
16 10 ____ Walking Group (LIB) 11-12 ____ Balance Class 11:30 ____ Bridge (Beg Lesson) 11:45 ____ Lunch: Beef Steak Patty 12:30 ____ Bridge (Beg Play) 1-3 ____ Fine Arts	17 Happy St Patrick's Day 10-11:15 ____ German 10-11 ____ Yoga 1 11:15-12:15 ____ Yoga 2 11:45 ____ Lunch: Corned Beef/Stew 1-2 ____ Travel: Touring Ireland 1-4 ____ Mah Jong 1:30-2:30 ____ Keep Well Clinic: River St	18 9:30 ____ Community Service Bears 10 ____ Spanish (Beg) 11 ____ Spanish (Int) 11-12 ____ Balance Class 11:45 ____ Lunch: Orange Almond Chicken 12:30-2 ____ Keep Well Clinic (Warren) 2-4 ____ Comp. Inst. By Appt	19 9:30 ____ Book Discussion 10-12 ____ Investment Club 11:45 ____ Lunch: Turkey/Veg Pasta 12:45-4 ____ Bridge (Adv) 1-4 ____ Mah Jong 1-3 ____ Outreach Office Hours 2-3:30 ____ BINGO	20 10-12 ____ Comp Inst. by Appt. 11:45 ____ Lunch: Potato Crunch Fish 12:45 ____ Movie: "Frozen River"
23 10 ____ Walking Group (LIB) 10-12:30 Art For Fun (Make Up) 11-12 ____ Balance Class 11:30 ____ Beg Bridge Lesson 11:45 ____ Lunch: Chicken Kiebsa 12:30 ____ Bridge (Beg Play) 1-3 ____ Fine Arts (Warren)	24 10-11:15 ____ German / 10-11 Yoga 1 11:15-12:15 Yoga 2 11:30-12:15 Office Hours/Brown 11:45 ____ Lunch: Chicken Quarter 1-4 ____ Mah Jong 1:30-2:30 ____ Keep Well Clinic 60 Grove St	25 8 ____ Foxwoods Day Trip 9:30 ____ Community Service Bears 10 ____ Spanish (Beg) 11 ____ Spanish (Int) 11-12 ____ Balance Class 11:45 ____ Lunch: Baked Fish 2-4 ____ Comp. Inst. By appt	26 9:30 ____ Better Bones 10-12 ____ Investment Club 11:45 ____ Lunch: Beef stew 12:45-4 ____ Bridge (Adv) 1-4 ____ Mah Jong 1-3 ____ Outreach Office Hours	27 10 ____ "Rightizing Your Life" (LIB) 10-12 ____ Comp. Inst. by Appt. 11:45 ____ Lunch: Cheese Lasagna 12:45 ____ Movie: "Swing Vote"
30 10 ____ COA at the Library 10 ____ Walking Group (LIB) 11-12 ____ Balance Class 11:30 ____ Bridge (Beg Lesson) 11:45 ____ Lunch: Pd Roast 12:30 ____ Bridge (Beg play) 1-3 ____ Fine Arts (Warren)	31 10-11:15 ____ German 10-11 ____ Yoga 1 11:15-12:15 ____ Yoga 2 11:45 ____ Lunch: Pier 17 Fish 1-4 ____ Mah Jong	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="font-size: 2em; font-family: cursive; margin-right: 20px;">March 2009</div> </div>		

2. Descriptive Assessment of a Free-Standing Senior Center

The facility will be designed to provide multiple flexible, functional spaces for classes, fitness, meetings and crafts. Office spaces will be designed and situated to ensure privacy and security. Socializing spaces will include a socialization area with seating, a library/living room area, and a game room. Accessibility is of paramount importance. Lastly, the building design will evoke a light, airy, inviting and welcoming atmosphere.

3. Facility Requirements and Program Review

The following are the *Facility Requirements* developed by the Senior Study Committee and the architects:

Activity Rooms - Main Hall/sitting area, Kitchen, Storage (tables/chairs), Socialization area with seating, Large Meeting Room, Activity Rooms, Storage (closet), Garden Room, Resource Room, Game Room, Fitness Room, Art Room

Office Area - Director's office, Reception office/circulation, Activity Coordinator office, Outreach office, Shared offices, Veterans office, Board Room, Small Meeting Room, Supplies/copy, Administration.

4. Space Requirements

The results of the Facility Requirements and Program Review were used to develop the *Space Requirements*. Space Requirements are the basis for the Fit Test floor plans (*see next page*).

SPACE REQUIREMENTS	SIZE
<i>General Estimates for Fit Tests</i>	(sq. ft.)
Activity Rooms	
Main Hall	1,810
Kitchen	620
Socialization area with seating	367
Flex Activity Room #1	491
Flex Activity Room #2	378
Lounge	285
Game	246
Sitting Area (1st floor)	547
Sitting Area (2nd floor)	210
Storage	64
Office Area	
Director's office	152
Administration	144
Copy/File Room	69
Customer Service	337
Area/Circulation	106
Outreach	116
1 Shared Office	212
Veterans office	152
Meeting Room	243
Other space requirements	
Restrooms	552
Mechanical	540
Circulation - corridors and stairs	4,532
Elevator	267
TOTAL SQUARE FEET	12,440

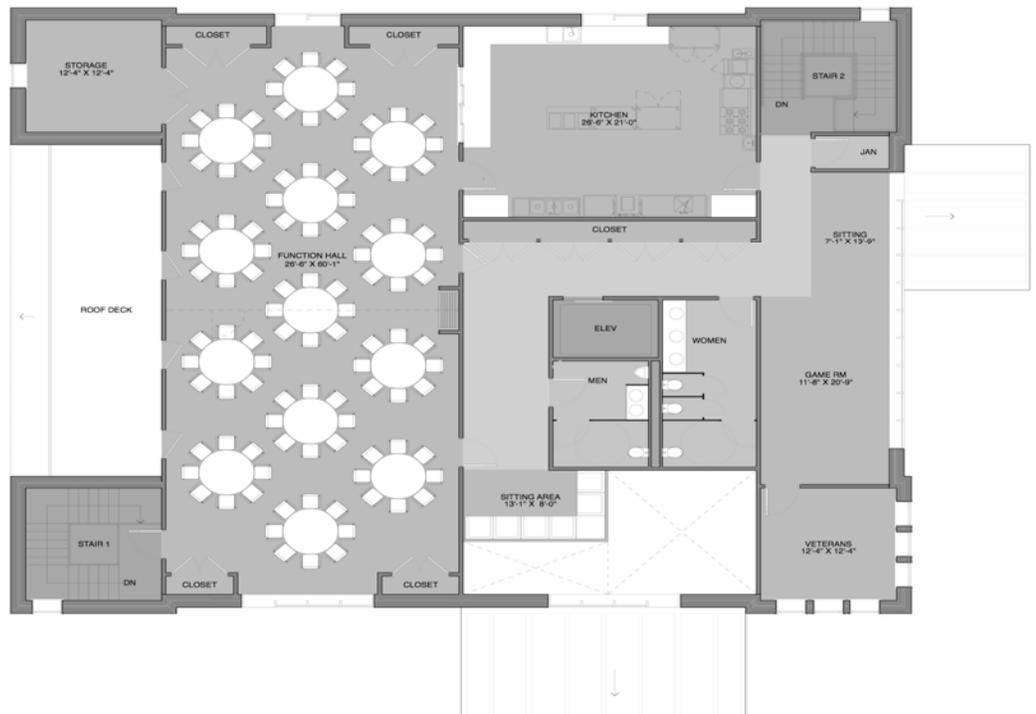
II. FIT TEST FLOOR PLANS

Below are the FIT TEST floor plans for a free-standing Senior Center. These have been developed by Sterling Associates, to assess space constraints on the proposed site and how the proposed *Space Requirements* can be “fit” onto the site. The actual floor plans will undergo extensive review with multiple opportunities for public input. Sterling Associates is a LEED-certified architectural firm and will be incorporating energy efficiencies into the design and will conduct energy modeling.



FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR



III. ARTICLE 20 APPROPRIATION

The current request (Article 20, Motion 2) is for a total of \$600,000 to develop detailed design plans and prepare construction documents. These funds will enable the project to proceed to the point at which all information and documentation is complete and ready for final bidding.

The current request of \$600,000 will be used for the following:

Article 20, Motion 2 Appropriation	
Architectural/Engineering/Other Professional Services	
Architect	\$355,055
Interior Design	18,000
Estimate at Detailed Design and Construction Documents	12,500
Traffic Study	35,000
Energy modeling	12,500
Printing Documents	30,000
Structural Peer Review	5,000
Other Project Costs	
Project Manager	84,000
PBC Personal Services & Expenses	11,000
Fire Prevention Review	1,500
	<hr/>
	\$564,555
Design Contingency (10%)	<hr/>
	\$35,445
TOTAL	<hr/>
	\$600,000

IV. PRELIMINARY BUDGETS

a. Preliminary Project Cost

Project budget development has been initiated and will continue upon approval of Article 20, Motion 2. The budget will be developed based on a building size of 12,440 square feet and located at the designated site. Current market conditions for construction projects are excellent and indicate that municipal buildings can be contracted with very favorable costs per square foot. Every effort will be made to focus on minimizing the overall cost, seeking competitive bids and maximizing value. However, it is unlikely the footprint and building square footage will be reduced.

The total project cost is under review by the Senior Study Committee, the Board of Selectmen and the Permanent Building Committee. Preliminary construction cost information will be provided at Town Meeting.

b. Project Funding

The appropriation of \$600,000 requested in Article 20, Motion 2, will be funded from Free Cash (a component of the Town's financial reserves). A subsequent appropriation for construction costs will be sought from Town Meeting at a later date, once design documents, permitting, construction documents and final cost estimates are complete. At this time, it is anticipated that the Board of Selectmen will bring the project to Town Meeting for final approval at the Annual Town Meeting 2010.

In anticipation of the approval of Article 20, Motion 2, there has been initial discussion of whether the total project cost would be funded inside or outside the levy limit.² In the Town of Wellesley, there is ample precedent of funding capital projects inside the levy limit when financially possible:

The following projects were funded *inside* the levy limit: Wellesley Police Station (\$3.9M), Preschool At Wellesley Schools (PAWS, \$2.8M), Wellesley Free Library (\$13.4M), the Warren Building (\$7.9M) and most recently the DPW garage and storage facility.

The following projects were funded *outside* the levy limit by debt exclusion: The RDF improvements (\$3.5M), the Wellesley Fire Station (\$2.5M), Sprague School/Bates School (\$23.0M), Middle School renovations (\$26.2M) and Wellesley High School (\$130.6M).

Given the complexities of the Town operating and capital budgets and the uncertainty of future economic fluctuations, both options for the funding mechanism of the proposed Senior Center will remain open.

c. *Estimated Operating Budget*

The Council on Aging will be responsible for the management and operations of the proposed Senior Center. The projected operating budget is as follows.

Projected COA Annual Operating Budget	
FY10 COA Budget Request	\$211,455
Incremental staffing - custodial (1.0 FTE)	\$38,000
Programming costs (<i>self-funded, fee-based programs</i>)	\$0
Utilities and supplies	\$28,000
<i>Less Rent and Fees currently paid for use of space</i>	<i>(\$23,100)</i>
Projected Annual Operating Budget	\$254,355
<i>Incremental difference</i>	<i>\$42,900</i>

Of key importance is the decision to structure the operations as a largely self-funding system. This model of operation is currently being implemented in many senior centers across the Commonwealth and is based on three general strategies:

- Management and custodial activities are staff positions funded by the Town within the COA annual operating budget;
- Income is generated through multiple sources, including grant programs, state funding, and a fee-based system of programming. Pricing is established based on the self-funding principle;
- Incremental staffing, aside from the custodial position, is primarily a volunteer system, with administrative and coordination functions provided by local residents without remuneration.

² A town can assess taxes in excess of its levy limit for the payment of certain capital projects such as the building of a new library or police station, or the building or renovation of a school. These exclusions are for the purpose of raising funds for debt service costs. Unlike overrides, debt exclusions do not become a permanent part of the base upon which the levy limit is calculated in future years. Rather, the tax increase lasts only for the life of the debt and once the borrowing has been paid, the increase to the tax bases ceases. *Source: "Levy Limits: A Primer on Proposition 2 1/2", Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services*

V. MOVING FORWARD TODAY

There are significant advantages to moving forward on this project today:

- 1. The need exists today and will increase over time.**
The need for services to support Wellesley seniors has been established and is essential and vital to the health and wellness of our community as a whole. The level of services to date has been significantly below that which provides for an adequate delivery of programs and services. As a community, Wellesley must ensure that all of its residents are cared for and valued.
- 2. This is a multi-year project with a two- to three-year project duration from today.**
This appropriation is essentially creating *the option* to approve the building of the Senior Center. The time horizon of a capital project such as this is approximately two years from final approval. The senior residents and their needs will continue to escalate during this time and therefore, investment at this point is critical to initiate the process.
- 3. The contribution of the Tolles bequest is significant** and will likely only be available for a finite period of time.
- 4. Construction costs today are highly favorable** and therefore would minimize the overall cost to the town. Municipalities that are going out to bid today have been able to take maximum advantage of the lower construction costs that are available.
- 5. We have identified an appropriate site** which accommodates the program and service needs, is centrally located, and which the Town already owns.
- 6. Investment decisions in long-term assets should be made with a long-term financial horizon.** The Senior Center is a 50+ year asset which will serve Wellesley well through the 21st century. Amortized over that period, the investment today is prudent and worthwhile.
- 7. The current economic environment can yield conditions** in our community which significantly increase the need for adequate and effective services for our seniors - to support physical and mental wellness, to provide a resource for information and education, and to strengthen community bonds.

VI. SENIOR SUPPORT IN WELLESLEY

There are several Wellesley-based organizations committed to serving seniors, each with a distinct function and mission. Together, these organizations provide a complementary, balanced set of programs and services, each with a vital role. The summary information below describes how they differ and complement each other:

- The ***Council on Aging*** mission is to serve as a supportive family resource as emerging needs of Wellesley residents become more complex and to advocate for and provide, in a cost-effective manner, a safe, congenial environment where seniors may participate in social, educational, and cultural programs reflective of their needs. The Council on Aging is a Town Department funded in part by Town funds, grants from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and Springwell, Inc, a private consortium which provides support and services for senior programs across Massachusetts. A Senior Center would be the central hub for the Council on Aging and provide the physical space and environment needed to effectively deliver senior support.
- ***It Takes A Town (ITAT)*** is a Wellesley-based volunteer organization whose steering committee is composed of individuals from Town Departments, area agencies, and resident advocates. The mission is to enhance the quality of life of Wellesley residents age 50 and over, by conveying information and resources, and responding to the changing needs of the community's constituents as they age. To fulfill their mission, *ITAT* partners with various groups and individuals to provide expertise and support in a variety of ways. Over the last two years, *ITAT* has supported the Council on Aging and the Senior Study Committee by organizing and facilitating a number of community forums and focus groups, where participants have come together to share their thoughts and perspectives about how a stand-alone senior center could benefit Wellesley residents. *ITAT* is not a Town managed or funded organization.

- **Wellesley At Home** in the initial stages of formation and will be a community-based, fee-based membership organization. It has been created by and for Wellesley residents who wish to live safe, independent and active lives in their own homes as they grow older. Similar to the successful “Beacon Hill Village” model, *Wellesley at Home* has been initiated by a group of long-time Wellesley residents as an alternative to moving from their houses to retirement or assisted living communities. *Wellesley at Home* hopes to enable a growing and diverse group of Wellesley residents to stay in their neighborhoods as they age, by organizing and delivering programs and services that allow them to lead safe, healthy productive lives in their own homes. It is expected that *Wellesley At Home* and the *Senior Center* would complement each other. *Wellesley At Home* is not a Town managed or funded organization.
- The **Wellesley Recreation Commission** offers a few courses specifically designed for seniors, in conjunction with the Council on Aging. Wellesley Recreation is a Town Department and primarily self-funding.
- The **Veteran’s Department** coordinates services and benefits to qualifying Veterans and their dependants and will be housed in the Senior Center.
- The **Wellesley Health Department** works with the Council on Aging to provide health and welfare related services, which includes home visits to elders in need. The Health Department sponsors weekly "Keep Well Clinics" at various locations in town. There, seniors can have their blood pressure checked and ask health related questions. The Health Department also sponsors annual flu clinics.

VII. ARTICLE 20

There are four motions anticipated under Article 20:

Motion 1 will provide for the taking of the property at 496 Washington Street by eminent domain. The property was formerly owned by the *Trustees of the Wellesley Post No. 72 American Legion Trust* which has relinquished control to the Town.

Motion 2 will be a request for an appropriation of \$600,000 for detailed design development, permitting and preparation of construction documents. The total project cost will be proposed to Town Meeting when finalized.

Contingent on approval of Motion 2, the following motion will be made:

Motion 3 will 1) transfer the land for purposes of a senior center, 2) in consideration of the Tolles bequest, accept the gift from the Mary Esther Tolles Charitable Foundation in the amount of \$825,000, 3) in consideration of the gift, name the Senior Center “**The Tolles-Parsons Senior Center**” in memory of Mary Esther Tolles and Evelyn L. Parsons, MD.

Motion 4 will be a request for an appropriation of funds for demolition of the current structure on the site. Motion 4 will be brought whether or not Motion 2 is approved.