

**MAYOR'S SPECIAL SENIOR CENTER STUDY COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC FORUM**

**APRIL 19, 2000**

**10:00 AM**

Chairman Shea introduced Mayor Baines.

Mayor Baines stated that he spent a lot of time with his mother Rena Nee Baines who was very involved with senior issues all through his life as a volunteer at the old Grasmere Home. She was the consummate volunteer on issues impacting people in the community. The voluntary activities tended to the basic needs of our senior population. The other source of his strength on these issues is Mary Mongan. Mary has a long distinguished history in this community around issues facing our senior population. She was the catalyst for building a lot of the senior citizens housing in our community. He is going to work very hard to make some of the things a reality for the senior citizens population. He looks forward to working with the seniors.

Chairman Shea recognized the members of the Mayor's Special Senior Center Study Committee along with Claire Dachowski and Barbara Vigneault. He stated the purpose of this meeting was for the public to fill out the questionnaire to give some idea of what concerns they have.

Chairman Shea introduced Tom Wallace, Architect who went through the questionnaire and tried to help with it as needed.

Mr. Wallace stated that he has been hired by the City of Manchester to do a feasibility study for the new senior center. The first step being to gather information that will be helpful in designing and planning. This meeting was scheduled to get opinions to include in the design of the building. After the information is received, a program will identify all of the functions in the building. That will determine the size of the building that will be recommended. Alternative sites will be looked at. Finding an appropriate site will be the most difficult task. All potential sites will be identified that are available and analyze these to come up with the best sites. Then design a building to go on three or four different sites. Advantages and disadvantages become apparent when this is done. It is important those things are identified and consider them before the final selection as to where the senior center would go and what it would contain and what it would look like. Working with the committee, the list will be narrowed down to a single recommendation presented to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. They will determine to accept that location and then move forward with the funding and construction of the building. The consultant firm REI located in Manchester,

representatives Allen Clark and Doris Duhamel, were present at the meeting. They will help in evaluating the sites that are available. The members of the committee have been visiting different centers in the area trying to get ideas of what could be included and some mistakes that were made.

Mr. Wallace referred to question nine; outdoor activities may include shuffleboard courts, garden plots, or outdoor dining. This would increase the site requirements.

Mr. Wallace referred to question eleven; the special care or treatment has different levels. There are some with definite medical needs and then there is a lower level called a social daycare which does not need healthcare professionals but people to assist. Some of the senior centers that were visited have that function.

Irene Robie stated these are people who do not have the proper health to go on their own to the center, where the large population of the seniors would be healthy and aware to get themselves to the center. These people would be strictly an additional end of the center that would be called an adult daycare center. They would be under supervision. This will not be a group of people sitting in the center and calling them into a nurse's office to care for them.

Tom Wallace stated it would be people who would be able to participate in the programs. If you want to have the center for people who could participate in general recreational/educational activities you would agree with question eleven.

Barbara Vigneault stated this questions refers to having a section of the senior center to address some daily living needs that people have when they are just over-the-edge a little bit. They are not healthy and active anymore but they can get out and socialize. They just need a little extra tender loving care and some meals during the day. When they become a little too frail to do everything on their own. If something happened to someone when they are a little more frail and they have to recuperate, then they can take part in that program until they are better to be healthy and active. This is a program to help people get a little bit of assistance as social it is not medical at all. We have medical adult daycares in the community already. This is to address the social adult daycare program. Noting that additional staff issues are being addressed.

Alderman Lopez stated to stay focused on the senior citizen center and not worry about the programs because they will take place depending on the group of the people working with the director. There are many opportunities to expand programs.

Mr. Wallace stated the study is scheduled to be finished towards the end of the summer to have a recommendation for the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Chairman Shea stated enough funding will be needed to build a senior center that will last for several years. One million dollars has been set aside so far. It will be up to everyone working together to get the appropriation necessary from the Aldermen to allocate money. All the members of the committee and other people from City government including Claire Dachowski and Barbara Vigneault are working very hard in the seniors' interest. It will happen sooner rather than later.

Respectfully submitted,

Leo R. Bernier  
City Clerk