



**Town of Newport  
Community Center Committee  
BOS Presentation Monday Oct. 20, 2014**

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**My name is Ryan O'Brien and I'm the Chairman of the Community Center Committee. I am here today to brief the board and the community on who we are and what we are working on.**

First off, thank you for creating the committee. We have a great committee who represent a range of interests and are working very hard to move this project forward. For more on when we meet and who is on the committee please visit the Community Center page of the Town website under the Boards, Committees, Etc link. I have a lot to cover so please excuse my face in my notes while I try to get through it as fast as possible.

**OUR PURPOSE:**

1. We have been tasked with the job of **“Improving Recreation and Community Center indoor space to better accommodate the current and future needs of Newport citizens”**.

**HISTORY of the Recreation Center and this Project:**

1. In 1939 a NH State Armory was built at 65 Belknap Ave in Newport.
2. In 1967 the Town of Newport acquired the Armory & the Newport Rec Department as we know it was born.
3. By 1990 due to its own success, the Recreation Department was starting to experience significant space limitation at the current facility.
4. In 1993 PJ joined the department and in 1995 became the department head.
5. In 1997 Banwell Architects completed a feasibility study to create a new facility in town.

6. Since 1997 PJ has mentioned the need for improved and more space in 10 town reports.
7. In 2010 Banwell architects completed a roof study of the existing building which indicated a “dire need of full replacement as expeditiously as possible” of the existing roof and supporting structural elements.
8. In 2012 the Facility and Fields Committee was formed to review current and future town wide recreation needs and report those needs to the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) Committee.
  - In 2013 the Facility & Fields Committee identified and prioritized 9 specific recreation needs in town with the top 4 being:
    1. Land Acquisition for additional fields
    2. Track & Field replacement & renovation
    3. A New or Improved Rec Center
    4. Football Field Lighting
  - After the Facility & Fields Committee gave their recommendations and cost projections to CIP they focused attention on the Rec / Community Center project. The following were born out of that work:
    1. In 2013 the committee reviewed the 1997 Banwell Study as well as possible alternative locations and after careful consideration, feedback from the community, BOS, cost analysis, history of the rec, a location recommendation was finalized.
    2. In early 2014 Christina O'Brien of SISR Architecture donated her time to help PJ create a preliminary space needs plan for a new building.
    3. In early 2014 PJ developed a matrix of current and proposed programs
    4. The committee discussed the difference between a Rec & a Community Center and realized the need was an inclusive Community Center.
    5. In 2014 Voter & User Surveys were created to provide community feedback and priorities.
    6. After positive feedback from the Voter Survey in May 2014 the Community Center Committee was formed in July 2014 to focus efforts on a new facility. Sept. 3, 2014 was the first official meeting of the new committee.

#### **CURRENT Community Center Committee Work (Sept & Oct):**

1. The committee has compiled and reviewed the User & Voter Survey data and have the following comments:
  - In May 2014 we received 440 responses to the Voter Survey and 201 User Survey responses in early September.
  - The survey results and comments have been extremely insightful and among the many things indicate the following:
    1. PJ and the current Rec are doing a great job!
    2. Overwhelming support for a new or improved building.

3. Quality & diverse recreation as well as community activities for all ages and interests is very important.
  4. There is a lack of non-sports programming and activities through the current facility.
  5. A large number of people who under utilize or do not use the existing facility would use a new facility if it met their needs.
- We received a ton of great comments on the surveys. Among the comments Pool & More Space are top priorities followed closely by more programming including non-sports programming for Teens & Kids (to keep them off the streets), and trailed by a desire for an indoor walking track, activities for all ages, and health & wellness programs.
    1. It is important to note Pool specifically was not included in the survey questions. Out of 440 Voter surveys 50 people or 11% indicated a desire for a pool. Out of 201 User surveys 66 people or 33% indicated a desire for a pool. Those numbers are based on people who specifically indicated a pool, an activity related to a pool, membership at a place with a pool, or mentioned a need for a facility like one that has a pool. We do not currently have maintenance, utility, and staffing costs associated with a pool, however, of the Claremont Community Center's \$9 million cost the pool space represents about about \$2.8 million or 31% of the overall construction cost. We would be looking at something more like a single 25 meter x 18 meter pool in a smaller space for a construction cost closer to \$1.6 million plus maintenance, utility, and staffing costs. **Although a pool would be a valuable resource for our community, and there is some interest in having one, the committee feels due to the initial construction cost, the ongoing costs, and the increased staffing costs associated with a pool, it is a luxury item the town can not afford at this time.**
    2. In the interest of further understanding the needs of the community Christy Whipple has reached out to some non-profit organizations in town and Jeff North will be reaching out to for-profit businesses in town. They are asking a series of standard questions to help us better understand who is using the existing center and what their needs are.
      - If you represent a business or group in town and have previously used or might want future use of the Rec / Community Center I strongly urge you to contact Christy or Jeff. We want to hear from you as your feedback is a very important part of our process.

#### **FUTURE Community Center Committee Work:**

1. Over the next few meetings we will be working very hard to digest all of the feedback and formulate a specific scope of work recommendation. We will be visiting similar facilities, analyzing required space needs, and formulating a preliminary project

budget.

2. Once that work is completed and land requirements have been addressed we will be putting together a comprehensive fund raising campaign. It is expected that campaign will be multifaceted including but not limited to: donations, special fund raisers, tax breaks, grants, and municipal financing.
3. From there we assemble a Request For Proposal (RFP) to solicit professional design teams, team selection, and securing of the necessary design team funding and authorization at the May 2015 vote.
4. Post 2015 voter approval we begin the design process, finalizing in construction drawings, an RFP for construction companies, and final project costs for voter approval in May 2016.
5. Post 2016 voter approval, construction begins with an expected completion in late 2017.

**COMMENTS & QUESTIONS:**

1. That about covers it... does anyone have additional comments, questions, concerns, or direction for the Committee?
2. Does the Board have any specific recommendations with regards to the pool at this time?
3. Thank you for the time to present to the board and community.