

# Report on findings Newbury Senior Center space

A presentation to the Town of  
Newbury Board of Selectmen

prepared by  
Newbury Council on Aging  
Expansion Committee

June 15, 2020

## **The Newbury Council on Aging Additional Space Committee Report**

Our Senior Center moved from a very small section of the Newbury Town Hall on High Road to the Existing Senior Center location in the Newbury Elementary School quite a few years ago. This space at that time was greatly appreciated as it afforded us a much larger space plus a kitchen.

In 2019, The Newbury Council on Aging Board of Directors set a goal to increase membership. One of the first tasks was to offer presentations. Over the year we successfully hosted three presentations with the support of the Friends of Newbury COA and the grace of the Newbury Town Library to allow us to use their space. However, this process rapidly brought to light the constraints and limitations of what we could offer our seniors. We realized that although we have organizational structure to expand, our hands are tied by our limited space.

Therefore, we respectfully present the following documentation to demonstrate the need for a larger gathering area for presentations and additional separate rooms or spaces for privacy for our office help, our Director, as well as privacy for our Seniors to have conversations with Shine, the Director of Veterans Services and all others from the State Government who come monthly to visit our Council on Aging. These visitors to our Senior Center are here to help with the personal problems and concerns of our Senior Citizens and they deserve to have confidentiality.

We are fully aware of the town budget constraints. Although our presentation shows many areas of our center that needs improvement, at this time, we are really simply looking for bigger space, areas of privacy and additional parking. Hopefully it will be a space large enough for us in the future to have a kitchen that will meet the Board of Health requirement to make on site meals on a regular basis.

POINT BEING, at this time, we are supporting a department and employees who are limited because of the lack of tools to do their job. The 2010 Federal Census reported we had a little over 1,400 seniors. According to UMass, a 30 percent state average increase in seniors is expected by 2030.

**Thank all of you that take the time to read this important information.**

## **Newbury Council on Aging limitations and issues at present location**

- We are allocated eight parking spaces close to Hanover Street. One is dedicated for the Van. Two are handicap spaces which are important and there are five left. There is not enough parking available for the activities we do schedule. The spaces are approximately 130 feet away from the COA entry door and for some seniors it is too far to walk. Our van is sent out to bring seniors to the COA when possible. There is no parking closer to the door as it is within a "Fire Lane" and parking is restricted. SEE PICTURE #1 & #2
- The school doors are locked so when you arrive at the COA you need to knock to enter. The door has to be opened for everyone entering the COA by a person in our main work/recreation room which requires someone inside to stop what they are doing to open the door. If they are on the telephone at the time they have to put the call on hold to open the door. SEE PICTURE #3
- When you enter you are in our large room (a former classroom) which is shared by the employees of our Council on Aging. They are in one large partitioned area that is open on one end. There are three work stations in this area. Our Outreach Case Manager; Our Program Coordinator/Newsletter Editor; Our Director (when she has to leave her office for the Shine visit) and a volunteer doing data entry share the third work station. When Karen Tyler, Director of Veteran's Services, Rep. Lenny Mirra and Mary Ann Nay from Sen. Tarr's office visit, and the seniors stop by to see them to ask questions or discuss what is on their mind, it is in the large work/recreation room with no privacy. See PICTURE 4, 5, 6, and 7
- Our Director must leave her office approximately 25 times each year to accommodate the Shine program (Medicare counseling program contract requires a private office for appointments with a phone, computer and printer) this happens approximately two times a month and one time per week mid- October to early December. The Senior Center has no private office space. Our Outreach case manager on private outgoing calls will ask for privacy and use the Director's phone at her work station. We are HIPAA and PHI.5 NON-COMPLIANT.

- Our Directors office is in the back of our space. It is a cubby area that is enclosed by two walls, one partition and open on one end. As previously mentioned this is the best you get for privacy and at times it has to be given to others to use for private conversations. See PICTURE #8
- There is a storage area for chairs, book shelves for paper storage, coat rack the printer and more. Picture #9
- The Senior Center has no exclusive restrooms. NES adult restrooms are utilized which are approximately 50 steps down the hall from the Center. This distance is sometimes problematic for senior guests. Additionally, toilet height is too low to the ground for senior citizens, even in the one handicap accessible stall. A badge is needed to enter the hallway of the school. (no picture at this time)
- Since we are in the school, we are required to be compliant with Triton School District safety regulations. They have lock downs, stay in place drills and fire drills which require the school, including the COA, to be evacuated until the all clear notice is given.
- Announcements come over the intercom speaker system. There is a speaker in the COA main work/recreation space which cannot be removed per school safety regulations. It is loud and disruptive.
- The COA kitchen is permitted (inspected and renewed annually) by the Newbury Board of Health to serve meals that are provided by a restaurant or commercial kitchen or that are prepared in the COA/Senior Center kitchen. We are only able to serve 20 in our recreation space using our round tables. Also, our van is needed to pick up seniors to attend due to lack of parking. Picture #10

**The above stated information has been prepared to explain why the Newbury Council of Aging needs additional space to be able to add additional programs and activities for our seniors and also explains the problems with the space itself being a school and their necessary requirements. We appreciate your attention to this report and hope we can all work together to find additional space in the Town Newbury for this important cause.**



Picture one #1

Senior Parking 8 spaces of

which one is for the Van



Lecture two #2

Our 8 spaces are located

at the front of the School



Picture three #3

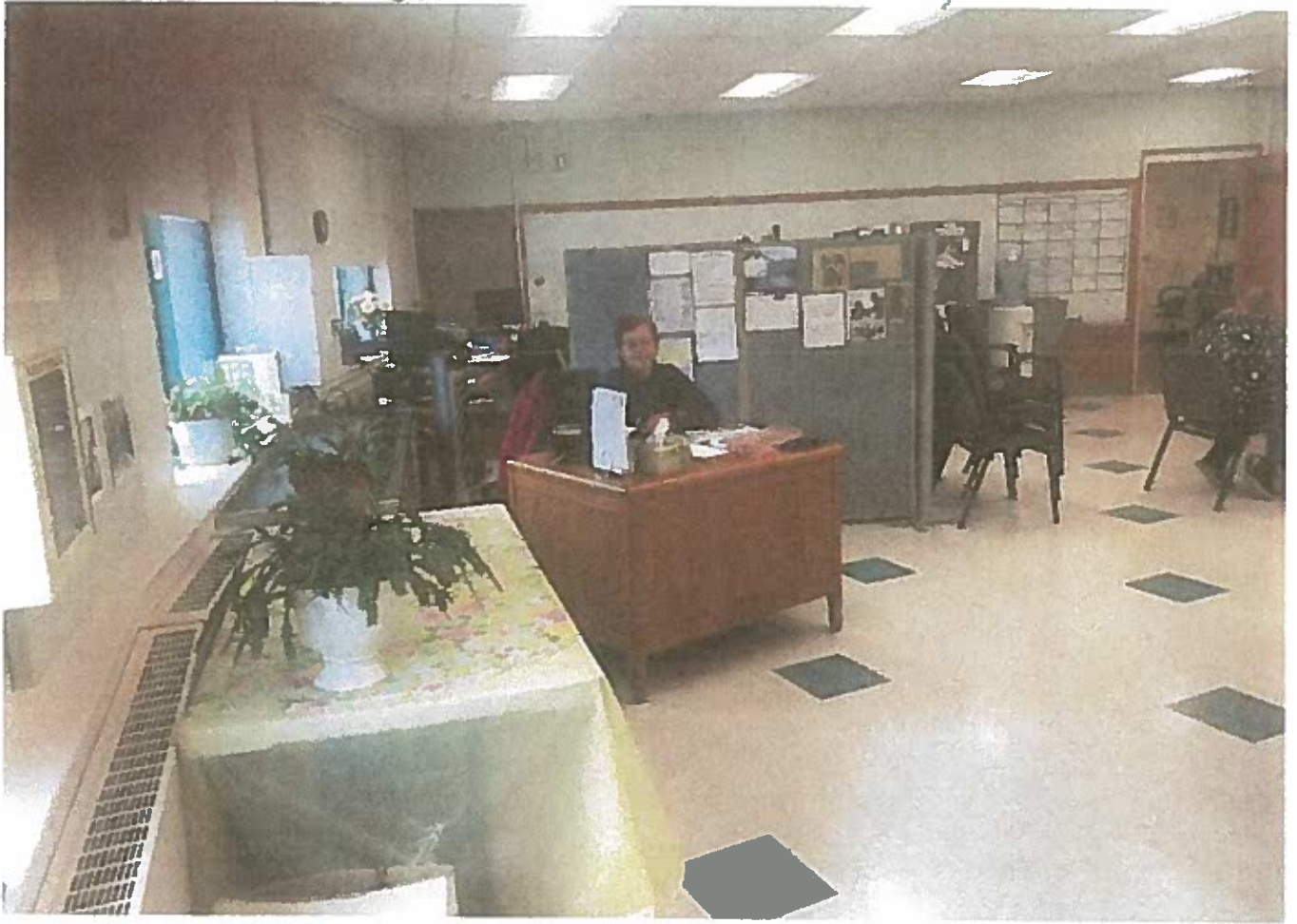
locked door.

Requires a person to

open from inside



Picture Tour #4



No private conversation area

Our one large room with

receptionist desk, partitions

office work space and

remaining area for activities





Picture five #5

Two of the three work stations

Screen also give a view

Area inside the partition area

*Picture #6*

Joyce Machiros <joycemach@comcast.net>

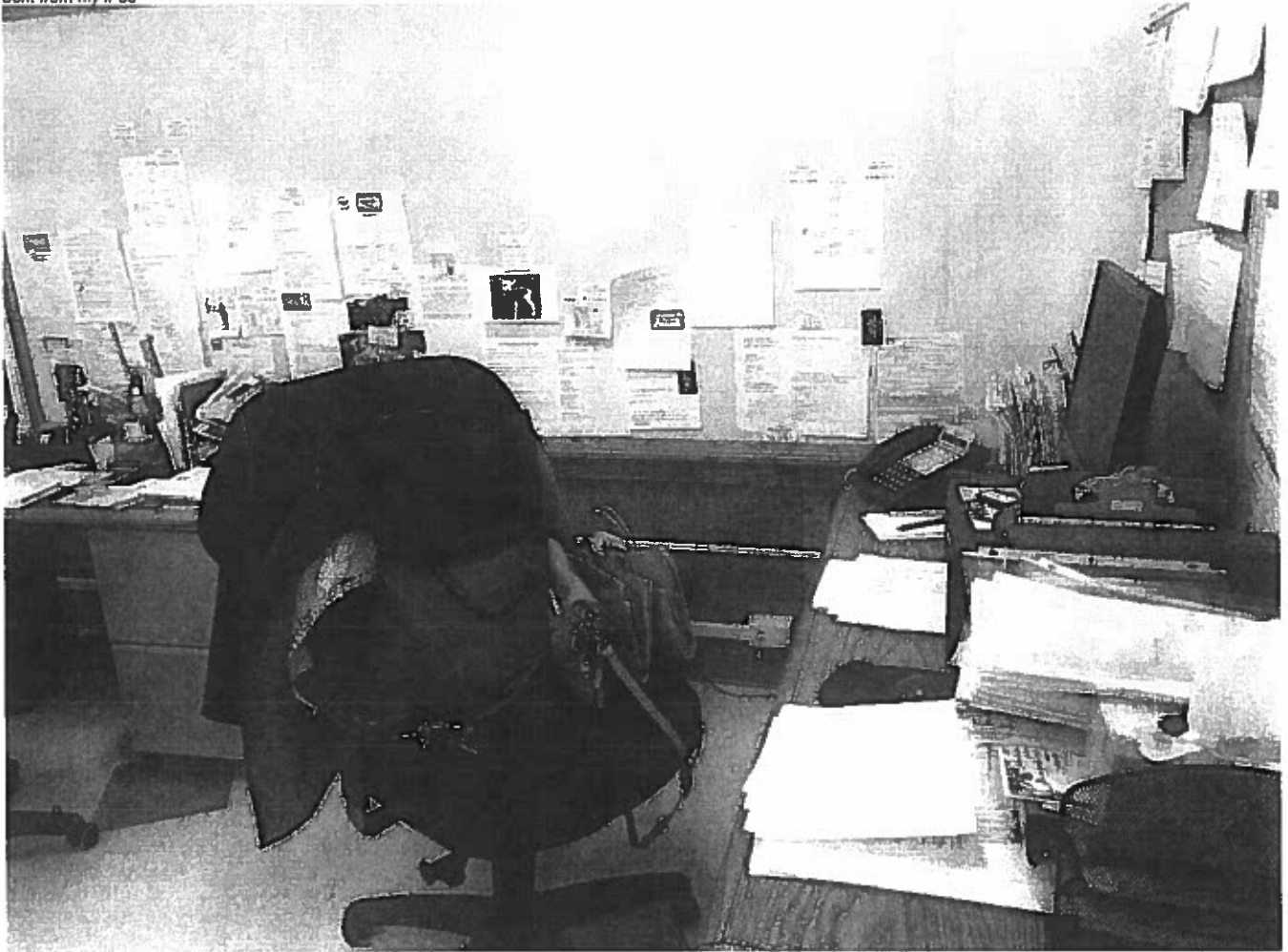
3/12/2020 1:03 PM

Picture

To mach4@comcast.net Copy joycemach@comcast.net

*Inside Partitioned  
area*

Sent from my iPad



• IMG\_2073.jpg (2 MB)

*Drisk Station #3*



Picture Series 17

Opening to Social

1st and 2nd Edition



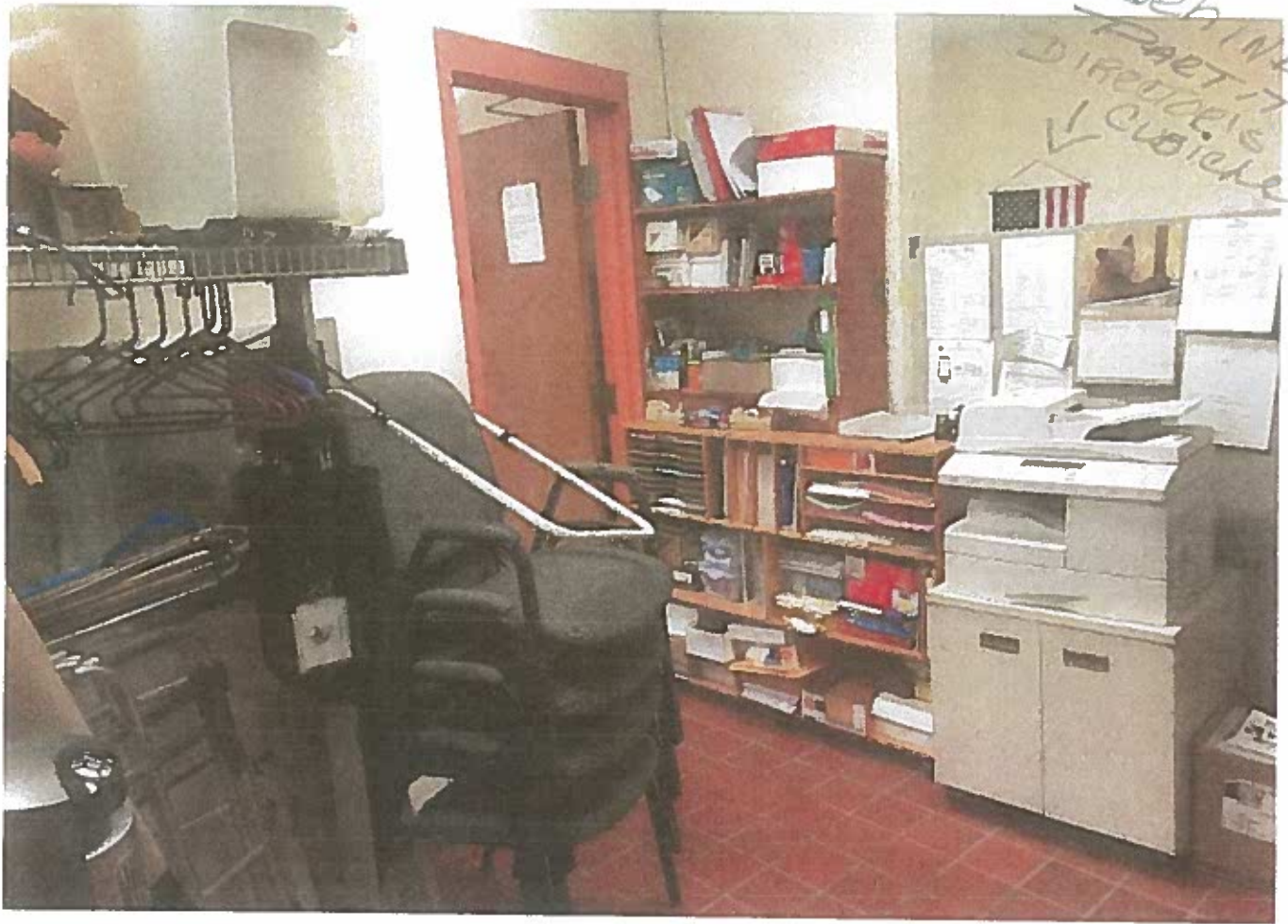


Picture light #5

The Director's cubicle. 2 Solid  
walls and a partition on left.

The entry way is open from

main hallway - door is closed



Picture #9

Storage Area, Kitchen

Door is on the left and the  
Director's office is in back  
of the partition behind

the copier





Recognized by the Older American Act as a community focal point. Senior centers has become one of the most widely used services among Americas older adults.

Senior centers serve as a gateway to the nations aging network, connecting older adults to vital community services that can help them stay healthy and independent.

Senior centers allow older adults to access multiple services in one place.

- Meals and nutrition programs, in visiting a senior center that offered a prepared meal at an affordable cost we saw seniors enjoying a nutrition meal and equally important socializing with others.
- Information and assistance. This could be help with health care insurance, taxes, social security, etc.
- Health, fitness and wellness programs. Fitness programs can help prevent disease, can improve mental health, decrease the risk of falls, improve cognitive function and provide social engagement.
- Transportation services. This would provide seniors rides to doctor appointments, grocery shopping and fun trips.
- Public Benefits counseling. Provide help with health care decisions, prescription plans, how to apply for food assistance and housing assistance.
- Volunteer opportunities. A senior center is dependent upon volunteers but it is twofold, volunteering has a psychological effect, it promotes well being and a sense of accomplishment, the older adult has a wealth of experience. We should also involve the youth in our community.

- **Social and recreational activities.** Studies show that people who participate in organized recreational activity enjoy better mental health and play a key role in enhancing their quality of life.
- **Intergenerational programs.** These programs bring together diverse groups and help dispel negative and inaccurate stereotypes. Children, youth and older adults are less alienated when the community recognizes that they can be contributing members of society. One study has shown that older adults with dementia and other cognitive impairments experience more positive effects during interactions with children than they did during non-generational activities.
- **Educational and arts programs.** Being involved in art programs that offer painting, drawing and other artistic pursuits has a positive effect on older people by reducing stress, improving their mood, improving cognition and provides a healthy outlet for expression.

### **What we found to be basic requirements for a Senior Center**

In our research for building standards for a larger space for Newbury's Senior Center, we could easily find the codes for public and or medical buildings and architectural firms to help you comply with them. But we were looking more specifically for proven standards on space from successful Senior Centers across the country. The National Council on Aging lists a formal procedure for the **certification of the Senior Center's organization and practices** but nothing outlining specific Senior Center building characteristics.

The National Association of States Units on Aging (organization now known as Advancing States) published "SENIOR CENTER PRACTICES, Trends in Developing Standard" in 2008. The article surveyed states on methods of funding, programs, and queried states on how they regulated the senior centers. Here's how they summarized their findings:

"Senior centers offer a sense of community to each state's aging population. Seniors may share a meal with their peers, learn a new skill and participate in physical activities and much more. Space and Privacy are needed to accomplish this goal for The Town of Newbury Seniors. Only two states have regulations that are enforceable by law."

In continuing our search for what we, in Newbury, should strive for in a Senior Center, we collected this specific information below from closer to home. note: ("bonus listings" are characteristics that we deem beneficial but not critical) .

### **MASSACHUSETTS SENIOR CENTER STANDARDS**

Design Considerations for Senior Centers, Published by Emmett Schmarsow,  
Program Mgr for COA, Mass. Office of Elder Affairs

*Edited by Newbury COA Senior Center Expansion*

*Committee to highlight applicable requirements for future Newbury center*

#### **Parking**

Van or emergency access.

Best case -allow 1 parking spot/100 gsf.

Enclosed lit entryway

Ramp

*Bonus: Covered entry ramp*

## **Entry, Enclosure**

### **Visibility of Signage**

Maintain even lighting transition (exterior-- interior).

*Bonus: Assisted/automatic doors*

## **Greeting/Waiting**

PROMINENT sign-in registration/security area.

High/low countertops /cubby holes for brochures & pamphlets

Coat storage

Seating area

## **Display**

enclosed bulletin board, display rack, notices, volunteer recognition.... Allow for wheelchair viewers.

## **Recreation/ Assembly/Dining/Auditorium**

Multi-use space: meals, presentations, assembly, exercise/fitness, line dancing, etc.

Chair mix (with & w/o arms); interlocking chairs may be required for public assembly.

Dining-round/folding tables with adequate space for wheelchairs

Floor plugs/jacks on both sides of partition near center of wall. Storage closets for chairs, dollies,

## **Kitchen**

Refrigerated, dry and temporary storage.

Ventilation for dry foods: 2" from walls, 6" from floor and ceiling: plastic DIY shelving is OK. "pass through" for serving/food return.

Restaurant style appliances, sinks, dishwashers

## **Quiet spots;**

conversation, cards, reading.

supportive/firm furnishings. no protruding legs.

## **Lavatories**

Locate "handicapped accessible" lavatory/ies near function room



*Bonuses: assisted doors, emergency call devices in lavatories*

### **Building Services**

Wide corridors to allow two wheelchairs to pass.

Carpeting with color changes near walls.

Translucent/clear panels in solid doors to reduce collisions.

Locate defibrillator near telephone jack (for automatic dialing when case is opened.)

*Bonus: Lockers for volunteers, tool storage closet.*

### **Administration**

Staff, board meetings/special functions; individual (private) consult space

Computer/ copier accessibility.

Intercoms.

Supply storage

### **Our Building Search ideals:**

Five to six (gross) square feet (SF) per elder

Add 1 SF per elder for self-prep kitchen

Keep in mind projected town growth; studies indicate 30% elder population increase to be expected once 2020 census is available.

Allow up to 30% of designed space is needed for storage.

## CONCLUSION

OUR RESEARCH HAS BEEN ENLIGHTENING. WE STARTED THIS PROCESS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OUR PRESENT SITE DOES NOT LEND ITSELF TO PROVIDING PROGRAMS TO OUR SENIORS AND COMMUNITY THAT COULD ENHANCE THEIR LIVES. IN DOING OUR RESEARCH WE LEARNED OF SO MANY ISSUES THAT EFFECT OUR SENIORS, WE DISCOVERED ISOLATION AMONG THE ELDERLY IS THE SILENT UNSPOKEN WORD, AFTER ALL WHO WANTS TO CONFESS THEY ARE LONELY AND WITHOUT COMPANIONSHIP, THAT ISOLATION CAN ACTUALLY DETERIORATE ONE'S HEALTH.

WHO WOULD THINK GOING TO A PAINT CLASS OR CRAFT LESSON COULD RESULT IN SO MANY POSITIVE IMPROVEMENTS, SUCH AS A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT, A TIME FOR FRIENDSHIPS, BOOST BRAIN POWER AND IMPROVE COGNITIVE ABILITY.

DID YOU KNOW LEADING A SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE CAN CAUSE DEATH AND DISABILITY. THAT EXERCISE (AMONG OTHER THINGS) CAN ACTUALLY REDUCE THE RISK OF DEMENTIA.

WE FOUND THE ELDERLY NEED A SAFE CONFIDENTIAL SPACE TO TALK BUT FOR THIS AND ALL THE PROGRAMS WE MENTIONRD WE NEED USABLE SPACE, PRIVATE SPACE AND ACCESSIBLE SPACE.

AS WE HAVE JOURNEYED THROUGH THIS PROCESS WE WANT TO SAY THANK YOU TO ALL THAT HAVE ASSISTED US WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE, FROM THE NATIONAL LEVEL, EMMETT SCHMARSOWE, LAURA DILLINGHAM- MAILMAN AND STAFF FROM THE MERRIMAC COA, THESE KIND PEOPLE WERE INCREDIBLE WITH THEIR PASSION AND ENTHUSIASM, THE STAFF AT SALISBURY COA AND OF COURSE OUR FINE PEOPLE AT NEWBURY COA.

**IT IS OUR HOPE WITH THE INFORMATON PROVIDED THE  
DECISION MAKERS IN THE TOWN OF NEWBURY WILL  
RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR SENIOR CENTER SPACE AND WORK  
WITH THE COUNCIL ON AGING TO BRING THIS TO FRUITION.**

**THANK YOU,**

**THE NEWBURY COUNCIL ON AGING EXPANSION COMMITTEE**

**JOYCE MACHIRO**

**SANDEE SMALL**

**EVELYN NOYES**