

City of Cambridge

The Elders Affairs Committee conducted a public hearing on Wednesday, January 18, 1995, in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall, beginning at 11:09 a.m.

Vice Mayor Sheila T. Russell, Chair of the above referenced Committee convened the hearing and stated that the purpose of this date's proceedings was to discuss issues at the North Cambridge Senior Center and senior participation in fundraising for the new Senior Center. Present at the hearing were Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Mayor Kenneth E. Reeves, Assistant City Manager for Human Services Jill Herold and Deputy City Clerk John E. Flynn.

To begin the discussion, Vice Mayor Russell opened the floor for public comment on issues that have arisen at the North Cambridge Senior Center.

Ms. Marion Nelson, a regular participant at the Center, voiced concerns with the intern who serves as leader of the Senior Sociables program. Ms. Nelson noted that attendance has dropped significantly since Ms. Theresa C. Romanoff, a Resource Counselor, left the Center in April of 1994. Ms. Nelson stated programming for the Senior Sociables Tuesday Meetings included Lectures, Movies and Birthday celebrations. Ms. Nelson also welcomed the news of Ms. Romanoff's upcoming return to the Center as Acting Director.

Ms. Hedy Pocius, a volunteer of the Center, stated that Senior Sociables served as an introduction vehicle to other programs at the Center. She further stated that Ms. Romanoff provides a security and a resource for seniors.

Ms. Herold stated that she was unaware of the staffing issue at the Center but would review the issue. She stated that Ms. Romanoff was working three days a week now four days a week as a Benefits Counsellor. In addition to her duties as a Counselor, Ms. Romanoff has participated in other activities such as leading the WOW Program (Watch Our Weight). Ms. Herold stated that due to a large number of walk-ins at 51 Inman and 15 Pearl Streets, a decision was made that Ms. Romanoff would devote one day a week to do counselling at these locations. She stated that she would re-visit the issue and acknowledge the volunteer spirit and work that is done at 2050 Massachusetts Avenue.

Councillor Born requested of Ms. Herold for the staffing level at the Center. Ms. Herold stated that funds are allocated for a full-time Director and a part-time Counsellor.

Hearing no further issues to be discussed, Vice Mayor Russell steered the discussion to the second topic: Fundraising Participation. Vice Mayor Russell acknowledged the presence of Mr. Walter Milne, President of the Friends of the Council on Aging, and noted that his organization has raised \$130,000 to date with a goal of \$180,000.

Ms. Alice Roulinitis, a participant of the Center stated that discussions have just begun on fundraising activities. She stated that some ideas include: a walk (similar to the event held by the Friends of Neville Manor), a dance and a musical.

Vice Mayor Russell commented on a radio report she heard that one million pennies represents \$10,000.00 and that maybe a penny collection drive could be considered by the seniors.

Councillor Born stated that a dance could be held with a theme "Pennies From Heaven" or that some other creative vehicle be used with the penny theme.

Vice Mayor Russell stated that as a start, a Committee be formed and she offered her assistance in this effort.

Ms. Herold announced that the Senior Center will be operational by Labor Day, 1995.

Mr. Milne stated that due to the long lead time needed in the purchase of furniture that fundraising needs to be started early. He also stated that this penny drive did not necessarily need an event it could be ongoing.

Mayor Reeves suggested that a thermometer be placed on the lawn of City Hall to show the fundraising effort in attaining a stated goal.

Vice Mayor Russell also suggested getting the schools involved noting that it could be used as an educational experience by learning how to count.

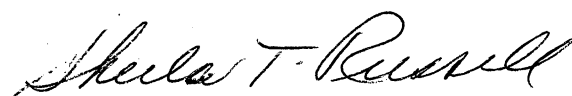
Vice Mayor Russell also stated that the organizing process needs to begin and that Ms. Virginia Jay and Ms. Roulinitis have volunteered to serve as Co-chairs. Other Committee issues to be discussed include setting an agenda and publicity.

Ms. Herold suggested contacting bottled water suppliers to donate clear water jugs to serve as a collection bank.

Vice Mayor Russell thanked all assembled for their comments and their anticipated cooperation.

The hearing was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sheila T. Russell".

Vice Mayor Sheila T. Russell, Chair

S-45

Committee Report #1

A comm. was received from John E. Flynn, Deputy City Clerk.
transmitting a report from Vice Mayor Sheila T. Russell.
Chair of the Elders Affairs Committee, for a public hearing
held on Wednesday, January 18, 1995 at 11:09 a.m.
for the purpose of discussing the issues at the North
Cambridge Senior Center and senior participation in
fundraising for the new senior center.

In City Council January 30, 1995

*Report accepted
Plans on file*