



Town & County of
NANTUCKET, MA

TOWN OF NANTUCKET SENIOR CENTER COMMITTEE

CRITERIA FOR PROPOSED NEW SENIOR CENTER

The need for a new and larger Senior Center on Nantucket has been under examination for the last several years by the Nantucket Center for Elder Affairs (and the Saltmarsh Senior Center), with the assistance of the Massachusetts Office for Elder Affairs.



The Senior Center Committee was appointed by the Nantucket Select Board, and charged with exploring and assessing potential sites for a new Senior Center, and further compiling the criteria for determining the parameters of the new center.

The criteria were assembled from an NCEA Strategic Planning Committee review of eight senior centers in comparable sized towns on Cape Cod or in eastern Massachusetts and from the study of *Aging on Nantucket* conducted by the University of Massachusetts, commissioned by the Nantucket Center for Elder Affairs and generously supported by grants from the Nantucket Community Foundation and ReMain Nantucket.

This brief report addresses the latter charge, listing guidelines to the size, nature and composition of a new, enlarged Senior Center for Nantucket, and making several recommendations.

Exclusivity: Four centers reviewed are exclusively Senior Centers, three are combined Senior Centers and Community Centers, and two are Senior Centers which also host services like Public Health, Emergency Planning and Veteran's Affairs. There is a concern that senior priorities may tend to be pushed aside in a Community Center.

Recommendation: Nantucket needs a dedicated Senior Center, ideally large enough to set aside and designate space for Town and community uses (such as Public Health, Emergency Planning and Shelter, Polling Station, meeting rooms, etc.), as well as having rooms to lease for events to help defray the cost of senior programming. It would be ideal for the Center to be able to host Community programming, but it should be under the administration of the Senior Center.

Size: The centers reviewed ranged from 6700 ft² to 22,000 ft², with a median of 16,000 ft². Most centers report insufficient space, or that they have already outgrown relatively new constructions.

Recommendation: Nantucket assessed needs indicate a 20,000 ft² facility would be appropriate. The costs of building the reviewed centers off-island ranged from \$4.175 M to \$9.7 M, with a median cost of \$7 M.

In addition, there is a clear need for much close-at-hand parking, probably in the area of 100 spaces, and a large area for safe drop-off and pick-up which allows for the extended time many seniors need to negotiate.

Spatial Arrangement: Centers reviewed comprise up to 25 rooms, including offices, Dining Room, Kitchen, lounges, gym and fitness rooms, class rooms, games rooms, computer room, media room, recreation area, arts and crafts rooms, library, great room, multiple bathrooms, changing rooms and showers, adult day care facility, Alzheimer/Dementia facility including a memory café, health clinic, and much storage capacity; several also include Outdoor terrace and garden areas, patio with grill, raised garden beds for hobbyists, and walking paths.

Operation: Centers reviewed were open Monday through Friday, with hours varying: one open 8 am to 5 pm, four open 8 am to 4 pm, two open 8 am to 4:30 pm, and one open 8 am to 8 pm. Staff ranged from 2 to 8 Full Time, with a median of 4, and up to an additional 6 Part Time. The present Saltmarsh Center is markedly limited by lack of hours and staff with 2 Full Time staff working 9 am to 4 pm.

Recommendation: Nantucket has the demand for a Senior Center open 8 am to 5 pm, requiring more Full Time Staff than at present.

Transportation: Every Center reviewed was serviced by Town and/or Regional Transportation. The Saltmarsh Center currently is served only on a limited basis by the Elder Services van which has other priorities.

Recommendation: Rather than investing in vehicles and staff for its own transportation, the already existing WAVE shuttle bus service expand its current routing to include the Senior Center.

Programming: The Centers reviewed provide a wide variety of programming, including:

daily lunch, occasional breakfasts and dinners

exercise and fitness classes (including aerobics, Tai Chi, Qidong, Yoga, Pickle Ball, Zumba, balance classes, Fit After 50, walking and biking groups)

wellness programs (including nutrition, laughter Clinic, meditation) and health screening and clinics (vision, podiatry, hearing, inoculations, blood pressure, etc.)

lectures and continued education, cooking classes, computer classes (including social media tutorials), iphone/camera classes, language classes, genealogy

arts and crafts

games (including Bridge, Mah Jong, cribbage, dominos, pinochle, Wii Bowling, table tennis, coin and stamp collecting, scrabble, bingo, etc.)

social activities and events (including book clubs, movies, live music and dancing, supper clubs, men's group, special evening programs, etc.)

field trips and travel programs

professional help (including Social Security, Tax, Senior Driving Lessons, benefits counseling, bereavement counseling, etc.), adult day care and support groups