

# **RAMSEY SENIOR CENTER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**March 14, 2013**

## Background Questions

1. How many seniors currently live in Ramsey?
2. What are the demographic projections for seniors?
3. How many senior citizens are *active* members of the Senior Center?
4. How many senior citizens are *inactive* members of the Senior Center?
5. Is there any information as to why more of Ramsey seniors are not members of the Senior Center?
6. Estimate what percentage of potential seniors would be gained if a newer, expanded Senior Center was available?

### **Current Senior Center Questions**

1. What is the purpose of the current Senior Center?
2. Who uses the Senior Center?
3. What's wrong with the current Senior Center? (e.g. the demand for services and programs has outstripped the building's capacity)
4. Why does the Senior Center need to be larger? (e.g. to increase participation, accommodate additional programs, etc.)
5. What current programs offered at the Senior Center requires more space?

### **Proposed Senior Center**

1. Are there any existing town buildings that could be used for a larger Senior Center?
2. Could some of the programs be held at other locations in town or at another town's Senior Center?
3. Has consideration been given to regionalizing with another town or towns?
4. Would combining a Senior Center with a Community Center be a consideration? If no, why not?
5. Who will use a newly expanded Senior Center?
6. What type and amount of space is needed to accommodate functions and additional programs?
7. What are essential functions the space must have? (e.g. kitchen, game room, storage, etc.)

8. What programs is the Borough currently financially supporting at the Senior Center?

9. Aside from the facility itself would the expansion of programs require more financial support from the town?

10. If yes, can they be self-funded through fees, donations, fundraising, etc.?

# Ramsey Senior Center Questionnaire Responses

March 2013

## Ramsey Senior Center Questionnaire – March 2013

A Senior Center Questionnaire was distributed to the Senior Committee to gather input from current Ramsey Senior Center members inquiring what they would like to see in a new/improved Senior Center.

The information gathered from these questions helped to identify the fundamental requirements to be considered for a new Ramsey Senior Center.

The following slides are a summary of the information that was gathered.

# **Questions About The Current Senior Center**



## Questions About The Current Senior Center

### **1. What is the purpose of the current Senior Center?**

- Provide a community focal point or act as a kind of “headquarters” for Ramsey seniors
- Advance a better sense of community and friendship for seniors, which helps improve seniors’ lives and quality of life
- Promote suitable activities for those seniors who wish to stay active - provide recreation, exercise classes, creative crafts, guest speakers, special events, and pursuits that accommodate their needs and interests
- Enable seniors to support each other emotionally - a place to talk and share their concerns, feelings, and experiences about this stage of life

## Questions About The Current Senior Center

### **2. Who uses the senior center?**

- Ramsey seniors who take part in the activities listed in their monthly newsletter, which included about 150-200 persons at peak events, about 70 regularly, but not at the same time
- Speakers on health matters and civic matters
- VFW Meetings
- Ramsey Recreation (baseball, football, hockey, etc.)
- Ramsey Responds
- Farmers Market group meetings
- Finch Camp in the summer
- Other special interests

## Questions About The Current Senior Center

### **3. What's wrong with the current senior center?**

- Too small – the demand for services and programs has outstripped the building's capacity
- Need more rooms for simultaneous activities, inadequate for large gatherings or classes
- Because of the limited space – seniors must constantly change room set-up for one activity at a time, which means constantly moving chairs and/or setting up and closing tables for next activity, takes time away from activities
- No adequate kitchen
- Heating and cooling problems
- Parking issues
- No organized maintenance, volunteers do much of the work when available
- Continuous disturbance from NJ Transit Trains (approximately 80 trains per day)

## Questions About The Current Senior Center

### **4. What current programs require more space?**

- Exercise programs, yoga, special arthritis classes, ping pong, dancing lessons
- Luncheons, special functions, dinner dances
- A larger space would allow increased participation to existing programs
- Fact is, many seniors over 70 need more space and accessibility for safer mobility and activities
- Would be nice to have the same activity held at one time instead of breaking off into smaller groups at different times because of limited space
- There is no social space to simply sit and enjoy each other's company – seniors have to leave the Senior Center to make room so next activity has enough space (e.g., Line dancing, bingo, hobby and craft classes, and exercise classes).

# **Questions About A Proposed Senior Center**

## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

### **1. Are there any existing town buildings that could be used for a larger Senior Center?**

- Seniors occasionally use the council chambers for special health exercise classes; but for the most part, not aware of other public buildings that are available on a regular basis
- Fact is, what seniors need is a permanent, dedicated space feasible for seniors to use with storage space
- To accommodate seniors, seniors would be at the mercy of the other locations' scheduling and priorities taking precedence over them, not to mention, lack of necessary storage space
- Changing location schedules where seniors are required to move from building to building can be frustrating and not practical

## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

### **2. Could some of the programs be held at other locations in town? At another town's Senior Center? Thoughts about a regionalized senior center?**

- Very difficult to get regular space commitments for seniors' needs
- Dedicated space is more practical for seniors and their activities
- Out-of-town travel can be problematic for some seniors; many seniors can't or won't travel beyond Ramsey limits; and traveling Route 17 is a safety concern for a number of seniors
- Concerned about out-of-town fees for using other towns' or private facilities (e.g., Midland Park is used for some activities, but travel still an issue)
- Some towns (e.g., Mahwah) do not allow non-resident senior members
- Regionalization dilutes the sense of a town's community
- Seniors believe that Ramsey community and taxes should consider helping its own seniors; many seniors have lived here most of their lives, have paid and continue to pay taxes that support the rest of the community without complaint

## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

### **3. Would combining a Senior Center with a Community Center be a consideration? If not, why not?**

- It's certainly possible, if this kind of center had multiple rooms, dedicated time for seniors' activities, separate bathrooms, a kitchen, and plenty of storage
- Multi-purpose rooms are fine as long as there is a large event room
- Other community groups also need space for events – for example, the boy scouts, girl scouts, etc.,
- Conflicting scheduling might be an issue if it were one center
- Seniors have always been willing to share. Yes, as long as seniors have dedicated space during the day for their needs and activities



## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

### **4. Who will use a newly expanded Senior Center?**

- Estimates range from 10 to 40 percent more seniors than are using it today. A more attractive, accommodating, larger space would bring in more people. Many are turned off by the current space, and scheduling issues
- In addition, townspeople have certain needs at different times - space could be used for town emergency situations. For example, it could be used as a warming center for people in winter when power goes out in areas of town

## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

### **4. What type and amount of space is needed to accommodate functions and additional programs?**

- Large meeting that could accommodate 150 - 200 people with a small riser stage and podium for guest speakers, special events and other community organizations use.
- Spacious room for exercise and activities that require a large open area – a space that could accommodate luncheons, larger health classes, guest speakers
- A space close to pool would be a plus to promote outdoor activities like shuffleboard, bocce, safe place to walk, a seating area
- Smaller rooms or a flexible larger space that could be divided into smaller areas for playing cards, scrabble, knitting, chess playing
- Room for focus groups on pertinent issues that pertain to seniors
- A small office for administrative activities and private discussions

## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

### **6. What are key essentials/functions Seniors must have in the new space?**

- Separate or multiple bathrooms
- Plenty of storage space
- A warming kitchen
- A small office
- Ease of access
- Not too far from parking area

## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

### **7. What programs are the Borough currently supporting financially at the Senior Center?**

- Yoga
- Tai chi
- Broadway shows are subsidized for seniors
- Finch Day Camp
- Youth Recreation Groups
- Other programs as needed

## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

### **8. Aside from the facility itself, would the expansion of programs require more financial support from the town?**

- Maintenance/handyman person on a regular part-time basis, DPW could provide
- Part-time coordinator /planner already established

## Questions About A Proposed Senior Center

- 9. If yes, could they be funded through fees, donations, fundraising, etc.?**
- Some seniors' responses said yes – if fees are not too high, most seniors are on fixed incomes. Seniors said they could raffle items that they make in craft classes to raise money
  - Some seniors' said no – Some of our taxes should benefit us in some way, the fact is, the majority of our taxes have always gone to benefit others

## Ramsey Senior Center Questionnaire Responses

End