

A meeting between the Town Board of the Town of Moreau and the Moreau Community Center was held on January 21, 2010 in the Town owned building on Route 197.

Supervisor Jenkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Town Clerk called the roll, which resulted in the following Town Board Members being present or absent:

**Town Board Members Present**

Tom Cumm	Councilman
Todd Kusnierz	Councilman
Gina LeClair	Councilwoman
Bob Prendergast	Councilman
Preston Jenkins	Supervisor

**Town Board Members Absent**

None

**Also Present:** Jeanne Fleury, Town Clerk; Donna Nichols, Director of the Moreau Community Center; Paul Schultz, Member of the Board of Directors Moreau Community Center; Tony Girard, Member of the Board of Directors Moreau Community Center; Jeanne Gutheil, Senior Program Director Moreau Community Center; Andrea Bello, Special Projects Coordinator Moreau Community Center; Gloria Osier, Financial Officer Moreau Community Center; Town Residents: Bud Whitford and Dana Charpentier and Adele Kurtz who arrived at 7:30 p.m.; Gordon Woodworth, Chronicle Reporter; Nick Reisman, Post Star Reporter

Supervisor Jenkins began by stating the purpose of the meeting was to discuss with the Moreau Community Center the possible use of the Town's building on Route 197 where they were holding this meeting for a day care operation by the Moreau Community Center. The Town doesn't have any current use or planned use for the building. In a discussion with Joe Patricke, Town of Moreau Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer, it appears that it would be an expensive process for the Moreau Community Center to bring the building up to code for a day care center.

Donna Nichols, Director of the Moreau Community Center, acknowledged that day care centers are highly regulated and everything would have to be to code. They currently operate a non-certified nursery site at Moreau Community Center and one option may be to move that operation over to the Route 197 building and add components to it and possibly any one of a number of youth services that the Board of Directors has been talking about.

She stated that they are currently dealing with their finances and trying figure out how to pay down the loan that was taken out for pre-construction and soft costs for the proposed new community center. It is their goal to preserve the center and continue on with the services they currently offer. They are also looking into other services that would generate revenue for the center. The space in the Moreau Community Center is at a premium and it is an older three story building that is not conducive to serving the population it serves. There is also a lack of parking.

Supervisor Jenkins advised those present that the basement in the Route 197 building is not to code and cannot be used. He explained how the Town Board considered using the building for some of the Town Offices, but they would have to split up the offices in the Town Hall and that wouldn't work.

Donna Nichols stated that perhaps another option they could consider was using the building for one or two off-site satellite programs. The building would be accessible for seniors. Youth services were going to be a large part of the new facility.

Councilman Kusnierz asked Donna what the loan amount was that they were trying to offset.

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Donna Nichols replied that it was around \$630,000.00, but they were still trying to put the numbers together. She has only been on the job for 2 ½ weeks.

Supervisor Jenkins asked Donna if she had given any consideration to talking with the USDA again. Maybe they would listen and maybe they would give the center a lower interest rate loan for a longer term.

Paul Schultz stated they were willing to look into this, but in reality they are just beginning to find out all this information as of a week ago. They are here at this meeting to talk about expanding their services.

Discussion followed on why the Route 197 building was not up to code for a daycare.

Councilman Prendergast asked Donna if youth services would be the financial gain for them and Donna replied "that is the niche".

Paul Schultz stated that they haven't had enough time to come up with a plan yet, but they realize they have to increase revenues. The full Board of Directors hasn't even met yet to discuss all the things they were finding out. Donna met with an engineer and that engineer is willing to take a look at the building on Route 197 and figure out what it could be used for.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that one of his concerns if they moved forward with this and the Town allowed the center to use the building would be that the Town would have to remove themselves from all culpability and potential lawsuits down the road and if this could even be done.

Donna Nichols asked the Town Board if they had a time line of how long the Moreau Community Center could use the building. If it was only a year or two it may not be worth their while pursuing this.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that the Board doesn't have a long range vision for the building. The Town recently acquired nine acres from the county in a land swap that is behind the building. Eventually they hope to build a court facility on the land. They looked into converting the existing building into a court facility, but it wasn't feasible due to cost and the fact that it still wouldn't meet the court's needs.

Tony Girard asked where the access to the nine acres was and Supervisor Jenkins replied that it was through the property this building is on.

Tony Girard asked if the building would become obsolete once a new court building is constructed and Supervisor Jenkins replied that it would be nice to site a new community center and Town facility together in one location. A lot of communities are doing that.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that he thought it was safe to say that when the Town moves forward with a new municipal center that this building would become obsolete.

Paul Schultz stated that it may be possible to move some of their programs to this building, but the Moreau Community Center has one of the best senior programs in the northeast and he would be hesitant to move forward without input from the seniors. He stated that there is some research that needs to be done.

Tony Girard stated that he suspected that the state regulations for senior programs aren't much less stringent than for day care.

Councilman Kusnierz asked if they envisioned the Town committing to allowing them to use the space and they pay for the upgrades.

Paul Schultz replied that the Moreau Community Center would pay for the upgrades. Their goal is to find out if or what the Town would charge them for rent. They would pay the utilities.

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Supervisor Jenkins stated that it was his opinion that we shouldn't charge them rent. The Moreau Community Center could pay the utility bills and carry their own insurance. If the Town charged them for rent then he dared say that the contract amount with the center would have to be increased so it makes no sense to charge rent.

Councilman Kusnierz agreed. The Moreau Community Center provides services to the community so the Town should be able to offset monthly expenses incurred, such as water bills, etc... if they occupied the Town's building.

Councilman Cumm stated that there are a number of services the center provides for the \$550,000.00 to \$560,000.00 contractual amount and the Town wouldn't be able to duplicate those services for that amount of money. We can't afford to let them go.

Supervisor Jenkins offered to talk with the USDA about taking over the Moreau Community Center's debt and coming up with additional financing. The main concern from the USDA previously was what was on paper they didn't feel would work.

Tony Girard asked if the USDA would help them with the soft costs and Supervisor Jenkins said this may be difficult. He did know that the USDA has a lot of funds available right now and they may help if there is a sensible plan in place that they feel the center can fund.

Paul Schultz stated that he would be glad to have Supervisor Jenkins do that for them and the center would be involved anyway they could. There is new leadership at the Moreau Community Center and it is their intention to move forward on a positive note.

Donna Nichols stated that the new community center project has been ten years in the making and the community is not seeing anything. She knows what the services are that they provide to the community and she wants to continue to expand on them. They also have to figure out a way to get rid of the debt so they can expand the programs.

Gloria Osier noted that there appears to be some water issues in the basement.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that the building was put up by volunteers for the previous owner of the building and structurally it is sound. However, everything wasn't done exactly as it should have been.

Councilman Kusnierz asked if they had a target for increased revenues.

Donna replied that it depends. If he was talking about paying off the loan at the amortized rate then they would need \$50,000.00 per year.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that if they could get refinanced they could potentially cut that amount in half.

Councilman Kusnierz asked what kind of day care expansion was needed for them to get close to the \$50,000.00.

Donna replied that the original proposal was for five, six and seven year olds and now those needs have been met somewhat.

Andrea stated that they needed youth services and not just day care.

Bud Whitford asked if the area could support another day care.

Tony Girard stated that there is a lot of housing going in.

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Donna stated that the center has an uncertified nursery school and it is a fabulous program, but Gloria added that the hours aren't long enough. Donna stated that they were considering full days.

Councilman Kusnierz asked what the cost is and Gloria replied \$80.00 a month for a three day program. She thought perhaps the Route 197 building could work for a summer program.

Adele Kurtz suggested they could look into coordinating programs with the Methodist Church Pre-School.

Gloria acknowledged that some parents did send their child to the Moreau Community Center, because they couldn't get into the UPK program at the Methodist Church and some didn't want their children to go five days a week, which is what the program at the Methodist Church is.

Councilman Cumm asked if the center had a certified nursery school program could it run five days a week and Donna replied yes. They can't run it five days now, because of the building they are in.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that Steve Gram, Recreation Director, would like to offer more summer programs. Since the park backs up to the Moreau Elementary School perhaps they could partner with the school.

Councilman Cumm stated that there are four elementary schools that sit vacant for the summer and that may be conducive to some type of summer program(s).

Donna added that the center would have the staffing.

Jeanne Gutheil mentioned a mentoring program whereby seniors could mentor students that need help with school work and Councilwoman LeClair suggested a crafts program too, some children don't have grandparents.

Dana Charpentier suggested the Moreau Community Center think about putting together a girl's softball, two day tournament that would generate revenues through concessions.

Councilwoman LeClair mentioned how Steve Gram is looking into utilizing the Town Beach more.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that there was shared services between the Town and the School District last summer. The school provided two bus drivers and buses to bus kids to the beach. The Town paid for the fuel for the buses. The problem encountered was that parents didn't want to put their children on a bus alone except to go to school. It is a confidence factor problem. If they were picked up at the Moreau Community Center perhaps they would be more likely to put their children on the bus. It would be more structured than at the Rec. Park.

Adele Kurtz asked Donna if the community center met with the YMCA about their new building proposed for Route 9.

Donna replied yes. The YMCA doesn't want to be seen as our competition. They are willing to collaborate. It is going to be a satellite work out place.

After some brief general discussion Donna Nichols thanked the Town Board for their time.

Supervisor Jenkins gave a brief closing statement and thanked everyone for their input.

The meeting was concluded at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Fleury, Town Clerk

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