**Town of Wareham**

**Request for Cost Proposal for:**

A Study to investigate the costs and requirements to transform The John W. Decas Elementary School into a community center

**Timing:**

Time is of the essence. The Steering Committee is to report back to the Annual Town Meeting, which will be held on April 25, 2022.

All Cost Proposals are due via email to **dkenney4619@gmail.com****, by 5:00 pm, Monday, March 7, 2022** and should not exceed five (5) pages. The selection will be made on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at the 7:00 pm Decas Steering Committee meeting. The Steering Committee may cancel this Request, or reject in whole or in part any and all proposals, if the Committee determines that cancellation or rejection serves the best interests of the Town.

**Background:**

The Decas Steering Committee, created by Wareham’s Fall Town Meeting, is seeking bids for a study to investigate the costs and requirements to transform the John W. Decas Elementary School (Decas School) into the John W. Decas Community Center (Decas Community Center).

The Decas School is a 68,000 square foot, single-story school that was built in 1968 (expanded in 1971) on approximately 17 acres, with ball fields, playground and parking lot.

Wareham’s Town Leadership engaged SRPEDD (Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District) to make suggestions on repurposing the school. (<https://srpedd.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/14185600/Final-Draft-Decas-Report-011421.pdf>) The highest and best use financially to the town was to sell the property to a High-Intensity Lab/Flex-Space company. The residents in Wareham had other ideas.

After the Town promising Wareham seniors a Senior Center but failing to act on it, residents placed a warrant article on the 2021 Fall Town Meeting to explore creating a community center that includes a senior center at the Decas School, as several other towns have done through repurposing schools. Wareham just constructed a new elementary school building, so the residents knew the cost of building a Senior Center was not feasible, but using an already-town-owned building, they saw a value far greater than short term money.

**Expectations:**

The Steering Committee meets every Wednesday evening at 7:00 pm, either in person or via Zoom. For the firm awarded the contract, attendance will be expected. The study should include: programming for the existing spaces in the building, phasing floor plans, cost estimates, and a final report.

**Town Meeting Warrant:**

Below is the actual Town Meeting warrant, which was approved unanimously at fall Town Meeting. On the following page is a copy of the Decas floor plan.

**2021 Fall Town Warrant Article # 20**

To see if the Town will vote:

(a) Upon the transfer of care, custody, management and control of the John William Decas Elementary School pursuant to Article 10 of the 2020 Fall Town Meeting, held on December 12, 2020, the Town shall maintain legal title and oversight to the land and buildings thereon, unless otherwise authorized by a future vote of Town Meeting.

(b) There shall be a Decas School Steering Committee, consisting of seven residents of the Town, who shall be voting members thereof, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, three of whom shall be appointed from among the nominations made by the body of the petitioners, one who shall be appointed from among the nominations made by the Council on Aging Board; one who shall be appointed from among the nominations made by the Capital Planning Committee; one who shall be appointed from among the nominations made by the Community Preservation Committee; and one who shall be appointed from among the nominations made by the Select Board. In addition to the voting members, the Town Administrator, the Council-on-Aging Director, and one member of the Board of Selectmen shall be invited to be non-voting, ex-officio members. A quorum for this Committee shall be four voting members. The committee will make recommendations to the body no later than fall Town Meeting 2022.

(c) The Steering Committee shall provide recommendations on the use of space in the John William Decas Elementary School building for and by the residents of the Town and other members of the public. Such recommendations may include but shall not be limited to Council-on-Aging and associated programming, a senior center, municipal meeting space, adult education, public library, training and enrichment programs, Veterans’ services, senior affordable housing, passive and active recreation, youth programming and sports, daycare, co-working flex-space, health and wellness services, or other such uses to benefit the Wareham community.

(d) The Town vote to transfer a sum of $15,000 from free cash for a study to investigate the costs and requirements of transforming the John William Decas Elementary School into a center to benefit the community as referenced above; said sum to be spent under the direction of the Steering Committee.

\**note: While the warrant article states “The committee will make recommendations to the body no later than fall Town Meeting 2022.” Upon a review of the Town’s financial support, it has become evident that the Decas Community Center must be prepared to become an entity by the beginning of the new Fiscal year (July 1, 2022) or we may lose the opportunity to selling it.*

