

Decas Steering Committee Interim Report Spring Town Meeting 2022

Committee Mission

Provide a recommendation to the town on the use of the Decas as a public facility

Perform an architectural assessment on building suitability

Deliver a final report at fall town meeting 2022

Architectural Assessment

- Data has been gathered from the COA and community groups. The layout of the building is very well suited towards the programmatic needs of these groups. A preliminary floor plan has been put together outlining each use and proposed location, including an indoor walking loop.
- The condition of the building is such that it is suitable for immediate use with some basic cleaning. The only requirement related to a change of use is the requirement for the building to have an accessible entrance, which already exists. There is no requirement to abate any materials such as asbestos unless it is directly impacted by a renovation.
- The only scenario where an ADA toilet room upgrade could be required is if the town or a building tenant chooses to renovate portions of the building in excess of certain dollar thresholds. These vary based on what is being renovated but generally start around \$100,000 for architectural and \$500,000 for electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems. A full building accessibility upgrade would only be triggered by renovations in excess of 30% of the building's "full and fair cash value" - so in excess of \$2.2 million. It is not anticipated that any tenant renovations will exceed this value. These restrictions could be noted in any RFP for tenants the Town issues.
- At some point the original toilet rooms were retrofit to accommodate accessibility as best as possible, and some come close, but none are currently 100% compliant. JPAP suggests that the committee consider renovating a set of toilet rooms to be compliant as part of a later phase of the project. There may be CDBG grants available specifically for toilet room accessibility

Community Interest

- *South Shore Community Action Council*
Currently serve 68 income eligible children with early education and wrap around services to support their families. SSCAC is eagerly looking to expand to provide more services and Decas would allow them to grow the Head Start program to reach 22 to 40 new pre K students. This expansion would also create 12 more jobs in town. SSCAC is also able to access up to \$250,000 in federal grant money to renovate their space to meet their specific requirements. They are looking for long-term lease stability.
- *Gateway Creative Arts Center*
The Gateway Creative Arts Center is a creative arts organization specializing in instructor-led and free time arts classes. The Center wants to rent classroom space to provide arts classes and free time to children, teens, adults, and seniors including after-school and studio programs. Sponsored art shows would be set up in the courtyard of the building to highlight community artists' work.
- *Gateway ABA Therapy, LLC*
Gateway ABA Therapy, LLC provides in-home Applied Behavior Analysis therapy for children, teens, and adults living in Wareham. They are currently located at 53 Marion Rd and grown to 40 employees. They are at capacity at their current location and are looking to expand to serve more families.
- *Nemasket River Productions*
Theater company dedicated to strengthening the quality of life in Plymouth County through the preservation and growth of dramatic arts. The company rents stage space for it 6 annual shows and wants to expand into the Wareham and Outer Cape area. The Decas auditorium would allow them to access our community.
- *Best Friends Pre-K*
Childcare provider based in Wareham serving preschool and school-aged children at two locations. Looking to expand programs to include before, after, and out of school care to children aged 5 to 10. Company leadership has expressed significant need for quality care for school-aged children in Wareham.

Senior Support

- The Council on Aging has been located at the Multi-Service Center (MSC) for years. The MSC is unsuitable for continued use for several reasons including being a 2.5-story building with 5 floors and an unreliable elevator and basement activity areas that require setup and breakdown between activities. The COA investigated moving to the Library or Hammond School, but both were found unsuitable for various reasons including parking, building condition, and the lack of kitchen facilities.
- The Council on Aging unanimously voted on March 18, 2022, to support moving to Decas School
- 147 town senior citizens signed a petition supporting the move to Decas School

Budget Estimates	
Heating	\$50,193.36
Electrical	\$47,633.63
Water	\$4,304.23
Sewer	\$13,667.18
Annual Safety Inspections	\$1,000.00
Trash Removal	\$2,000.00
Cleaning Services	\$30,000.00
Facilities Operation Manager	\$90,000.00 inclusive of benefits package
Building Maintenance Allowance	\$30,000.00
Expense Subtotal	\$397,616.81
Expense per square foot	\$5.23 per square foot
Available Rental Space	Appx 27,000 square feet
Regional Average Commercial Rent Rate	\$16 per square foot per year
Income Potential (Rate X Sqft)	\$432,000 per year
Net Income	\$34,394
Additional Funding Sources, Grants, Fundraising, Decas Foundation Etc	

Next Steps

- 1) Recommend Town Administration draft Request For Proposals (RFPs) for community organizations as tenants
- 2) Establish necessary financial accounts to capture and expend revenues from future Decas tenants
- 3) Move Council of Aging to Decas School
- 4) Urge Select Board to support using portion of FY21 CDBG Activities Funds for ADA bathroom upgrades
- 5) Provide building access to the Decas Steering Committee and the John W. Decas Community Center Foundation, Inc