

March 9, 2012

Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council  
City of Oak Ridge  
Post Office Box 1  
Oak Ridge, TN 37831

At its December 14, 2009, meeting, City Council approved Resolution 12-117-09 that directed the Elder Citizens Advisory Board and city staff to develop a timeline leading to the construction of a new Senior Center. A companion resolution approved a lease extension with Anderson County for approximately 9,600 square feet that would allow the Senior Center to remain at the Daniel Arthur Center through December 31, 2014.

Since the December 14 meeting, the Elder Citizens Advisory Board has established a 501(c)3 organization and is raising funds to furnish a new center. Working with city staff, the board developed a Request for Qualifications, reviewed submittals, conducted interviews and recommended an A/E firm to perform the Phase I Needs Assessment, develop concept drawings for a new center and prepare an estimate of construction costs.

At the August 8, 2011, meeting, City Council accepted the ECAB recommendation and approved a contract with Studio Four Designs for the Phase I work. Studio Four Designs has conducted three public meetings and provided opportunities for public input at several ECAB meetings. Using experience gained working with senior center projects at the O'Connor Center, Corryton Senior Center and the Carter Senior Center, Studio Four was able to engage the seniors to look at short and long term needs.

Studio Four Designs has completed the assessment work and is ready to report their findings. At its March 5, 2012, meeting, ECAB voted unanimously to accept the summary report from Studio Four Designs that supported the construction of a new 12-15,000 square foot senior center based on comments and input from the public. The firm developed a concept plan for a center that took into account a combination of dedicated and flexible space. Attention was given to creating a safe, well-lit, accessible environment that provides seniors with program opportunities and room to expand.

Numerous questions were asked during the public meetings regarding where the new center would be built and how would it be funded. Studio Four focused its attention on needs and did not evaluate the Daniel Arthur site or any other area as a potential home for the center.

The ECAB is sensitive to the current economic climate in the City as a result of recent closings in town. Since the current lease ends on December 31, 2014, the board has reevaluated earlier draft timelines and it is comfortable with a reasonable delay in awarding a design contract. The board would like to work with the City Manager to develop a timeline that allows the project to continue but at a slower pace.

Sincerely,



Kerry Trammell  
E.C.A.B. Construction Committee Chairman