

SAC Medical Use Working Group

Minutes of Meeting

October 24, 2002

Present at the meeting:

Dr. Jerome Slate, Lynn Lowenstein, Alan McClennen, Patricia Worden

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Jerome Slate at 7:10 PM. The minutes of the October 2nd meeting were approved unanimously. Due to the small attendance no formal action was subsequently taken. Instead, a discussion occurred as follows:

Matters concerning the SAC meeting of the previous week were discussed. It was observed that since that time;

- a decision is likely to be reached soon as to hiring a consultant with medical real estate expertise.
- that one of the consultant contributors to the recent scenarios would no longer be active at these public meetings.

Other issues discussed were as below:

Surprise was expressed at the large volume of residential construction presented in the scenarios at the SAC meeting with little real vision for the site or recognition of the range of goals of the Selectmen.

Dr. Slate was questioned about the change of laboratory licensure by Lahey Clinic (with no courtesy of advance warning) which prevents non-Lahey patients to have testing there and its impact on the practices of non-Lahey physicians. The change was noted to be surprising since laboratories are quite lucrative to run. The question came up as to what this decision of Lahey's may indicate about their attitude toward the non-Lahey medical community. It was noted that there have been other reductions of Lahey Clinic services from the Symmes facility such as the elimination of mammography.

It was emphasized that physicians need laboratory availability and other extras such as X-rays. Without such amenities, there is not adequate service for a medical practice. (The availability of such services is the reason that physicians prefer to practice in a cluster of physicians.) Dr Slate mentioned that since Lahey has barred his patients from the Symmes laboratory, he asks them go to the Mount Auburn Hospital laboratory at 22 Mill Street.

The Symmes site still appears desirable for patients. Dr. Slate discussed a poll which he had conducted of his patients from Lexington, Belmont, Arlington, and Somerville asking whether they would prefer to visit his office at Mount Auburn Hospital or at Symmes. 100 % of these patients chose Symmes.

It was mentioned that when a medical consultant looks at the entrepreneurial aspects of the Symmes situation, he will see a very difficult situation now. The consultant will find a fractured and fragmented medical facility at Symmes. The consultants will be looking for a cohesive medical community that they can organize. The current scenario does not fit this model.

Hope was expressed that the VHB consultants would completely reshape their commercial vision and Scenarios 1, 2, and 3. Scenarios should reflect the fact that the North wing is easier to reconfigure because of the lack of asbestos. The South wing is more problematic unless it can be used without extensive reconfiguration. Rents would presumably reflect this. The South wing may be similar in construction to the Sancta Maria building (which could not be rehabilitated into a non-medical facility).

A hypothetical scenario which was mentioned as being of interest is one requiring no demolition, only renovation, including renovation and possible extension of the nurses' building for condominiums with 15 units affordable. This would preserve all the current open space.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Worden, Ph.D.