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# Open house meetings provide insight for Community Center needs

By SEAN DELANEY

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As the latest part of continuing efforts to gather feedback for the future of the Shelby Township Library and Shelby Township Senior Center, the Shelby Township Board of Trustees and the Community Center Advisory Board hosted a series of open house meetings on March 2.

"We are addressing one of the top issues that has faced our township since I was elected in 2008, and we could not begin to finalize our direction without going directly to our bosses, the taxpayers of Shelby Township," Supervisor Richard Stathakis said. "These meetings were great because they addressed a myriad of issues ranging from parking to desires for new services."

At the core of the discussion at the open house was the option of moving the library and senior center to the vacant Ewell Elementary School on the corner of Shelby and 23 Mile roads.

According to early estimates, a move to Ewell would expand the library from 12,500 square feet in its current location to 26,250 square feet, and the senior center would expand from roughly 14,000 square feet to 22,282 square feet at Ewell.

"On its surface, the Ewell option seems like a great fit," Park and Recreation Director Joe Youngblood said. "But there were a lot of interesting issues raised by our residents at the open houses. Our residents asked some very insightful questions that will help the CCAB make a well-vetted recommendation to the Board of Trustees."

Previously, the CCAB,

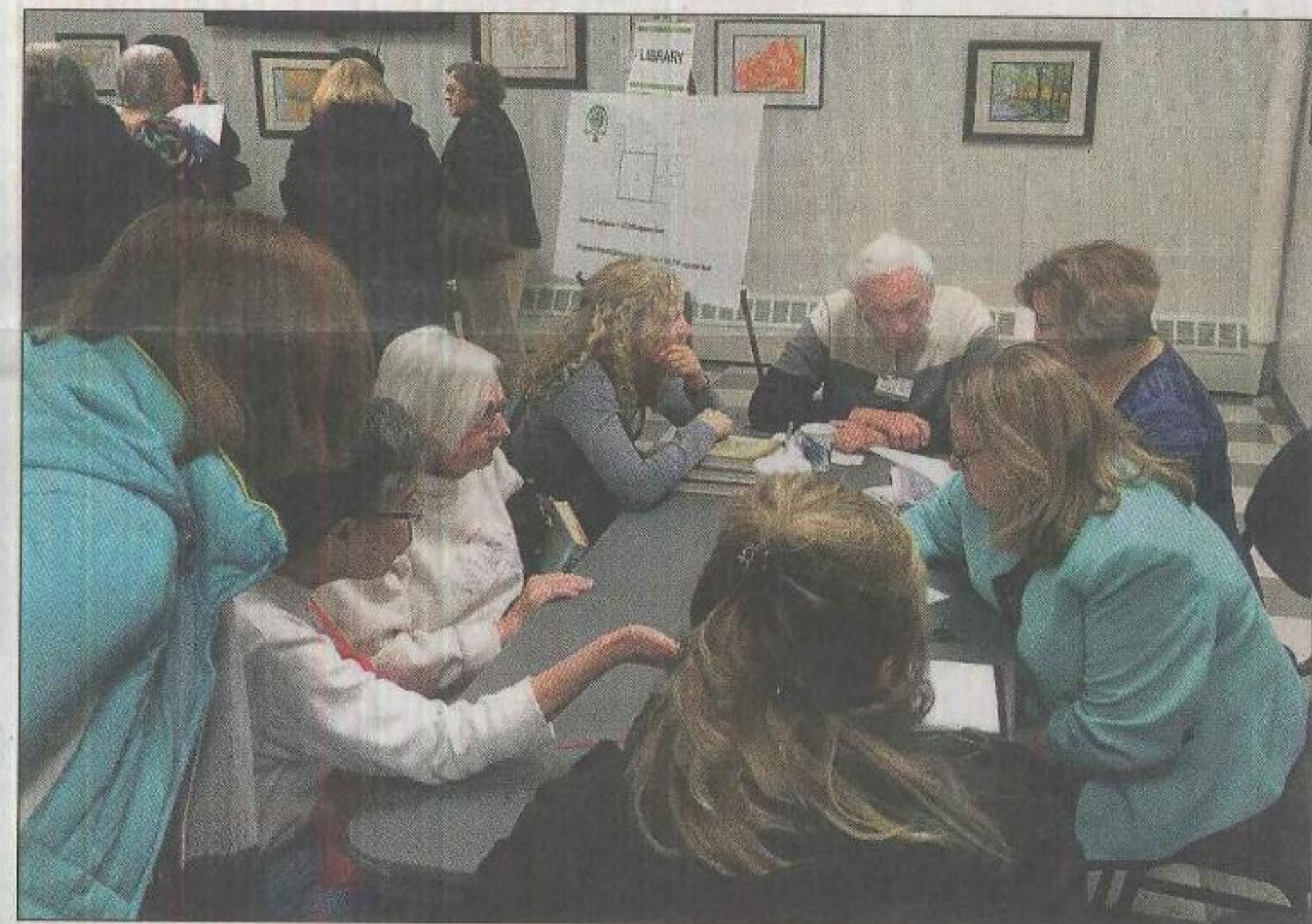


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made up of Youngblood, trustees Paula Filar and Doug Wozniak, engineers Fazal Khan and Carol Thurber and DPW Director Dave Miller, met with members of the Board of Trustees and staff from the Library, Senior Center and Cable TV departments to evaluate their needs.

"I have the utmost faith in our terrific employees at the library and senior center to understand the needs of their facilities, but, as elected officials and stewards of tax dollars, it is imperative we sit down with our bosses, the taxpayers of Shelby Township, and give them a chance to take part in this historic project," Stathakis said.

At the open house meetings, the hundreds of residents who attended were able to interact with the CCAB and ask questions regarding the future of the Community Center while sharing ideas about how they envision the future of the library and senior center.

"The open house follows the blueprint established by Planning Director Glenn Wynn for the township's Master Plan update," Stathakis said. "I was very impressed by the in-depth, specific and insightful one-on-one conversations we had at his open house, and it worked just as well to get some very insightful feedback for the Community Center's future."

However, not everyone felt that the meetings were a success. Resident Donna Murphy, who has lived in Shelby Township for 51 years, questioned whether the Board of Trustees would actually listen to the input residents provided at the meetings.

"I would also like to see more discussion," she said.

Resident Jerry Moots also questioned the township's plans, noting that the Older Persons Commission in Rochester already provides many unique services to its seniors, which he said he would like to see available

in Shelby Township if the board moves forward with plans to relocate and expand the senior center.

"They (the OPC) have tours, they have lectures, they have a walking track, they have a pool, they even have a wood shop," he said.

According to Stathakis, the CCAB will meet to discuss the feedback from residents provided at the open house meetings and form a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees on how to move ahead to address the future of the library and senior center.

"We are approaching a resolution to this historic undertaking in our township, and I am very excited to see what the recommendation is from the CCAB," Stathakis said.

For additional information or to reach the CCAB, contact the Parks, Recreation and Maintenance Department or PRM Director Joe Youngblood at [youngblj@shelbytwp.org](mailto:youngblj@shelbytwp.org) or at 586-731-0300.