

# Creative Proposal to the Town of North Yarmouth

## February 3, 2016

Submitted by MemoryWorks and the Volunteers of America  
For the purpose of identifying the maximum redevelopment opportunities  
Of the North Yarmouth Middle School and the 20 acres lot it resides upon.

The enclosed proposal is in response to the Former North Yarmouth Memorial School RFP dated December 22, 2015 which requests “creative plans to renovate, repurpose, replace or sell the Memorial School building and property.”

Two non-profit 501c3 entities, MemoryWorks and the Volunteers of America Northern New England (VOANNE) are collaborating to respond to the NYMS RFP. VOA has significant experience in building and operating affordable housing for seniors. Capron has experience working with seniors with memory impairment (dementia) and has extensive experience in systems design and systems analysis. He brings creativity and entrepreneurship and an understanding of senior needs to this project. He also attests to the quality of VOA’s work.



North Yarmouth has many community needs and wants that it would like addressed. The challenge of this project will be to address as many of those concerns while also optimizing the potential for this property.

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The Crossroads Project  
Former North Yarmouth Middle School

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## Executive Summary

Kenneth A. Capron, founder of MemoryWorks, is collaborating with the Volunteers of America Northern New England (VOANNE) to respond to the NYMS RFP. VOA has significant experience in building and operating affordable housing for seniors. Capron has experience working with seniors with memory impairment (dementia) and has extensive experience in systems design and systems analysis. He brings creativity and entrepreneurship to this project. He also can attest to the quality of VOA's work.

The Middle School is at the crossroads of Route 9 and Route 115. Both roads are heavily travelled. Thus we refer to this as the Crossroads project. NY has wrestled with a village concept for over a decade. The loss of the Westcustogo Grange and the unexpected transfer of the NYMS as well as the current placement and limitations of the Town Offices have all forced the issue of how to best utilize town assets. To add to this, there is an undeveloped block of land nearby which is reserved for Veterans. The economy seems healthy, the population is stable, there are community resources that can be put toward the village center plan and the residents of NY appear to have the desire and enthusiasm to take action.

The Crossroads team would like to address as many of the town's needs and desire. As the core of the Crossroads proposal, we propose construction of a 40 to 60 unit affordable senior housing facility in place of NYMS. VOANNE is exceptionally good at designing, constructing and operating senior housing. Beyond housing, the objective is to creatively fold in other amenities. We agree that inclusion of a community center to replace Westcustogo is an excellent fit at this site. We think it is also appropriate to include a senior center, a moderate size adult day care and even a child care center (run by senior residents). Other add-ons are included in this proposal that are intended to create the sense of village, to take economic advantage of the NY crossroads location, and to consolidate numerous other town resources in one place for simplicity and convenience.

The Crossroads anticipates the need to comply with State and Federal regulations for senior housing and components. There is no question that we will face a challenging regulatory environment. It is hoped that NY itself will facilitate the development of this center in their own zoning and planning requirements. The fewer roadblocks we face, the better the end result. Sewer, water, gas utilities are important to the project. The nearby pit would be a concern for seniors as would travel speed on Route 9.

This will also be a financially challenging project. The extent of extra amenities that can be provided will depend on available funding. The more funding up front, the lower rental rates can be for seniors who reside at Crossroads. Local funding will improve the community center amenities as well as the village concept and the crossroads concept. It is however our belief that this is the type of project that won't be duplicated within NY any time soon. So we want to do it right the first time. Because there are so many items undecided, it is premature to offer estimates. It would however be reasonable to expect that beyond the initial construction, the Crossroads Center should not be a long range burden to NY taxpayers. It will however need to be tax-exempt in order to attract donors to a capital campaign for the project and for future enhancements. Minimizing debt obligations will impact the totality of the project.

## Experience

Design, construction and management of senior housing requires knowledge of the regulatory environment for the various components. Including a community center and other amenities makes this project even more challenging. The reason VOANNE has been selected as the partner for this project is because of the exceptional track record they have here in Maine. Not only are their 10 Maine facilities attractive, comfortable, safe and well built, it's their residents who tell the difference. VOA residents are happier, more engaged, and very satisfied with their VOA community. MemoryWorks hosts Memory Cafes at three VOA facilities. First-hand experience affirms that VOA residents are happy. Many VOA residents have moved from other housing providers for just that reason.

Each VOA center includes community space with a kitchen. They organize activities for their residents. And they connect senior residents to the community with youth programs, Veterans support and elder care navigation for all seniors.

“Our network of affordable housing facilities now includes 484 properties in 40 states and Puerto Rico and our nationwide portfolio has grown to 19,522 affordable housing units and includes large urban complexes, small rural developments, elderly housing, multifamily housing and housing for those with disabilities. We house more than 25,000 people each year.” <http://www.voanne.org/>

VOA is also a member of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a national nonprofit group dedicated to helping make our communities more environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable through community planning and development. VOA will manage the facility components of the Crossroads proposal.

## Project Narrative

North Yarmouth appears to have high hopes and expectations for the NYMS property. Our objective is to address as many of those expectations in a one-stop center which is attractive and functional to residents, to the 7000 cars a day that pass through and to the NY senior population. Out of a population of 3560, there are 371 seniors in NY. With referrals from within NY and from daily traffic, there appears to be enough potential demand for affordable senior housing of around 40 to 60 units. We propose that a facility of that size serve as the core of this section of the NY village. We also propose that the facility be run by a resident manager and would include an apartment for that manager and a small family. A resident assistant manager/activity coordinator will also be considered in order to assure 24/7/365 availability. Housing the staff leads to longevity at a time of growing staff shortages. Renting space to a home care agency also will address growing staff shortages in Maine.

To the core, we propose inclusion of a community center and senior center to serve as the replacement for functions once performed at the grange, and more. The size and design of those centers will be determined by funding for them. The Crossroads project will endeavor to make these centers the go-to place for all NY residents. There needs to be space for community activities, events and gatherings.

Commuters who pass through NY, and NY residents may find it helpful to have a place to drop their child(ren) for day care, or their elders for adult day care, or both. And since the facility will be occupied, it will be open even during unwelcome weather typical of Maine. Both the ADC and the child care will be required to meet State regulations.

The nature of the facility lends itself to provision of numerous social services. Meals on Wheels could use the facility kitchen to prepare meals from local producers. A milk truck style home delivery would reduce transportation needs of remote seniors and families.

Following is a list of creative uses proposed for the Crossroads project. Items beyond the basic senior housing, senior center and community center are obviously going to be dependent on available funding. Both the financing and construction will require the level of expertise that VOA provides. No one expects such a showroom project will be easy. It is the right thing to do. The Crossroads will be something North Yarmouth can be proud of. It will attract people to North Yarmouth.

#### Combined Facility

- An affordable senior housing facility (VOANNE) up to 60 units,
  - resident manager(s)
  - activity coordinator
- A senior center – facilitated and staffed by MemoryWorks
- A community center and/or teen center (may be able to build in style of a grange) for meetings and activities of the community and its organizations.
- A memory café/clinic – operated by MemoryWorks

#### Services Offered:

- Wireless access
- Tele-Communications equipment for web meetings
- Adult Day Care, Respite Care
- Child Day Care run by the seniors
- Meals on Wheels Distribution point
  - Uses community center kitchen
  - Promotes local food growers
  - Enhances NY outreach to its senior residents
- Transportation Hub
- Milk truck delivery service (concept under development)
- Guest Lodging for relatives/visitors (lack of local lodging)

#### Business Anchors

- Doctor's office(s),
- Health care providers
- Home care services,
- Clinic space(s),
- Community dentist,
- Community pharmacy

- Community grocery store,
- Coffee shop
- Restaurant or pub

Amenities:

- Walking trails; wheelchair paths; bike paths
- Picnic Area with shuffle board and horse shoes

The deed could include language that returns ownership to NY if it ceases to function as senior housing.

VOANNE is also interested in exploring options with the Veterans' regarding their 5 acre parcel. There may be future options to create a Veterans facility at their site.

The intent is to make this campus self-funding through rental of space to health and elder care providers and retail services. It is also our intent to minimize the transportation challenges of seniors. Phase I would be the residential facility with construction to begin within 18 months of acceptance of the Crossroads Project and subject to financing.

## Financial Capacity

Historically VOA has pursued HUD funding for similar projects. As an organization they are in good financial condition. They are in fact at a point where they are seeking out opportunities to address senior housing shortages and services. There are also USDA rural development Grants and Loans that will be considered. And there will be a major capital campaign to raise money for basic construction. MemoryWorks and VOANNE will pursue grants from private foundations also. The less debt there is, the more affordable the project will be for future residents.

Possible funding sources include:

- HUD Loans
- USDA Rural Community Development Initiative Grants - this program provides funding to help non-profit housing and community development organizations support housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas. (<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-community-development-initiative-grants>)
- USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program - this program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings. (<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>)
- Westcustogo Insurance Proceeds \$560,000
- Proceeds of sale of former Westcustogo site
- Donation of NYMS 20 Acres
- Capital Campaign
- Private Foundations

- Commercial rentals

## Estimated Project Cost

Information needed to provide an estimate is insufficient for this type of proposal. The objective however is to have no net financial impact on North Yarmouth taxpayers after completion. It is fair to say though that the cost depends on a substantive analysis and design by an architect and engineers. Other factors include the permissible height of the project, and the choice by NY residents of which amenities it would like. We would need to ascertain the willingness of NY to transfer the property to the developer as opposed to selling the property. Such a transfer could contain a contingency that the property would revert to NY if at any the end of the first 20 years it ceases to be used for the stated purposes. Development of the community center and senior center would depend on the willingness to transfer Westcustogo insurance proceeds and sale of the former site as an offset to construction costs. Addition of municipal space at Crossroads would require discussion also.

We anticipate some rigorous negotiations over these finer points. The more resources we have to work with, the more we can build. It seems quite attainable that we can provide all of the space and services that NY has expressed interest in. It will depend on the resources made available. This will easily be a multi-million dollar project. Funding commitments from HUD and/or USDA will be affirmed before construction begins. Support from the Grange and the town will be ascertained shortly after acceptance of this proposal. Capital Campaign pledges will be ongoing.

The work plan is also dependent on many variables at this time. The site needs independent review. The ability of local fire, rescue and police to service this complex facility need to be evaluated. The financing needs to be firmed up. And the precise extent of the construction plus amenities needs to be agreed upon. What is proposed here is a chance for the community to be a part of the ongoing decision process to make the Crossroads fit community choices as best as possible. This proposal is obviously not profit driven. It is not politically driven. It is not ego driven. It is motivated by the large demand for senior housing that defines an age friendly, dementia friendly village concept. In this case, the project attempts to fulfill many peripheral objectives and collaboration with the community of North Yarmouth.

## Work Product Samples

The cover page displays six examples of the types of facilities VOANNE builds. A good comparable to the Crossroads would be the Paul Hazelton Houses in Saco. The two Hazelton House buildings are independent housing complexes for low income seniors (62+). Their 1 bedroom apartments include a full kitchen, living room, bedroom and bath. Paul Hazelton House is located in a residential neighborhood on the local bus line. Groceries, banks, a pharmacy, a library and many dining establishments are within walking distance. VOA also offers a myriad of activities/events on-site including health clinics, nutrition classes, bingo games, craft/art classes and musical programs.

Amenities:

- Sunny, spacious community rooms with full kitchen
- Lobby lounge/TV area
- Laundry room
- Mailroom
- 2 story building equipped with an elevator
- On-site parking is available
- Library with computer



## Conflicts of Interest

VOANNE and MemoryWorks are unaware of any conflict of interest at this time and stage of the project. They agree to make North Yarmouth aware of any conflict or potential conflict that may arise during the course of the project. Efforts will be made to avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety, relating to other clients of the proposing firms, or to officers, directors, and employees of the Town or other groups involved in the project, which could be created by providing services to the Town.

## Indemnification

VOANNE and MemoryWorks do agree to indemnify and hold the Town harmless from claims, demands, suits, causes of action and judgments arising from a proposal's performance including claims of professional malpractice or negligence unless otherwise specified in the terms of contract(s) or agreements, or resulting from changes to the project by other than the Crossroads team.