TOWN MEETING
CAMBRIDGE STATE HOSPITAL REGION
August 22, 1984

PROGRAM

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
Miriam Karlins
Town Meeting Coordinator

"FOR YOUR INFORMATION": A REVIEW OF CURRENT STUDIES
Colleen Wieck, Ph.D.
Project Director

CITIZENS RESPOND
Audience Participation

Resource persons are available in the audience to answer questions and supply additional information.

In order to allow time for maximum audience participation, please limit your comments to three minutes.

Persons wishing to write or phone their suggestions, concerns, or questions may do so by writing to Colleen Wieck, Ph.D., Project Director, State Planning Agency, 201 Capitol Square Building, 550 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101, or phoning (612) 296-4018.

A one-day, toll free call-in will be held statewide on Tuesday, October 16, 1984, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The procedure will be for the caller to dial 1 (800) 652-9747 and ask to be connected to the "State Hospital Study." The state operator will then connect the caller to our phone.
Town Meet: Be there!

All eyes will be on Cambridge Wednesday evening, Aug. 22 as people from throughout east central Minnesota turn out at the Cambridge Elementary School gym to let state planners know the importance of the State Hospital to the community as a whole.

For yeats the Cambridge State Hospital has existed on the edge of town. And, although most people here knew deep down inside that the institution was a mainstay of the local economy, it was often taken for granted.

Since the big debate on the future of the system began when Rochester State Hospital closed virtually without notice, there has been more awareness in the local community about the impact of the state hospital on the local economy. All of us are beginning to understand in a very real way just what it would mean if the state hospital did close down.

Because the meeting at Cambridge is the first in a series of town meetings—each town in which a state hospital is located will have one—there will be a lot of state wide, and maybe even national news media attention.

Because of the importance of the State Hospital to our area, the meeting deserves your attendance. Because people will be watching the meeting as an indication of community support, your attendance is doubly important.

M.M.
State study stirs hospital closing fear

By EVELYN PUHFER

Does the state have an obligation to continue operation of Cambridge State Hospital based on historical background of public needs? That's the question posed by Cambridge Town Meeting Coordinator Miriam Kroll at a meeting Monday night. The study was prompted by legislation introduced by Rep. Dick Wicks of Cambridge. The legislation called for an informal study on the feasibility of any state hospital closing before the comprehensive study. Many community residents in the town were concerned about the agency's role in listening to the community, said Wicks. "We are not preparing a closure report." There was considerable apprehension expressed by the approximately 40 people who attended last night's meeting in the High School auditorium. Many of those persons were members of AFSCME, the union representing state hospital employees, while others were parents or relatives of state hospital patients. Other participants expressed concern about the hospital's impact on the local economy as the area's largest employer. Continued on page 3.
being frank

WHAT IS THIS world coming to? Farmers can't eat hay or straw in their barns. Stores and offices or factories without air conditioning will function in 90-plus weather, but in a cool, Wing Home prisoners cannot be kept in jail if the temperature is over 85 degrees. I would have to think for a while to come up with anything else to match that for sheer stupidity.

While people in jail should not be abused, most of them are there because they violated a law or laws, not for an expense paid vacation. A few or two to circulate the air and put up with the heat, like some of us but the jail have to believe. They are forced to do it. To make it bearable, maybe let an opening and let in a little air so that people don't have to come up with such a stupid decision.

TOWN MEETING be held Wednesday night, Aug. 22 from 7:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Elementary Gym.

The meeting will be held by the State Planning Agency and will be the only meeting in this area.

The purpose of the meeting is to inform the people of the total cost of the hospital and the alternatives which the state has of closing the hospital or the State Planning Agency and other state agencies to study the economic impact of closing state hospitals, and present the findings to the legislature. Also to obtain the economics of the people in the area and answer their questions.

The total economic impact is this area by the State Hospital last year was approximately $23 million. Meeting the town meeting will not

Cambridge Star
8/15/84

HAVE A GOOD WEEK!
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The closing of CSH would negatively impact the district and the school facilities. "We've been working close with CSH to serve severely handicapped students. We've been friends and partners," More City Administrator Robert Preston expressed concern not only for CSH, but for many city residents as well, about Moose Lake State Hospital. Urged Preston, "We're going to need help in communicating. It's a very, very traumatic experience."

The closing of CSH would also mean a commitment to the state hospital system. Said CSH Chairwoman Excelle Welch, "It means we're going to have to open a new facility in Duluth." Welch added that the state health board and the hospital employees would be seeking to find new homes for the patients who had been placed out of the state hospital system. An additional concern expressed was the impact that the state hospital system's closure would have on the state's budget and the ability of the state to provide care for its mentally disabled.
“What would closing Cambridge State Hospital mean to the community?”

Joe Lindroth, Cambridge: "It would have a profound effect on the community. There's no doubt that the hospital has helped the economy for many years."

Gus Hyle, Cambridge: "I think it would have a big effect on the community. There are a lot of people employed out there."

Billy J. Bartsch Sr., Spencer Brook: "It would mean an awful loss of jobs. I think it should be kept open."

Kanneth Albrecht, Brook Park: "We'd lose jobs. That's the biggest thing."

Carol Hansen, Cambridge: "I think they should keep it open. Cambridge gets a lot of business from the residents there."

Selma Severance, Cambridge: "I think it would have an effect on the business climate. Quite a few people are employed there."
Dozens at forum speak against closing Cambridge State Hospital

By Sam Newlund
Staff Writer

Cambridge, Minn.

Cheers and loud applause greeted Gloria Habeck Wednesday night when she described to an audience of about 300 people a mentally retarded man who had been happy at Cambridge State Hospital but unhappy when he was released "out in the world."

Habeck, chairperson of the Milaca County Welfare Board, was among dozens of people who gathered at Cambridge Elementary School to try to head off what they said they fear will be the closing of the state hospital — or to at least soften the blow of closure if it should come.

They spoke at the first of nine public forums being held around the state between now and Oct. 9.

The meeting attracted about 300 state hospital employees, business people, school officials and relatives of patients. Some employees may lose their jobs or may be forced to move if Cambridge should be closed.

Habeck was among several speakers who said they were worried that moving to public group homes or other alternatives to the hospital would traumatize the patients.

Others claimed that group homes would have lower standards of sanitation and patient care and would pay inferior wages and fringe benefits to employees.

"Don't take the residents away from the hospital," one woman said. "This is their home."

Some hospital employees were angry at the prospect of having to relocate if their jobs were phased out by the closure or a rapid shift of patients to smaller community units.

"Are they going to be able to buy our homes so we can work elsewhere?" demanded Steve Bolen, a hospital mechanic.

Bill Sawyer, who owns a Cambridge hardware store, said the state should behave like a responsible corporate citizen toward the community. "It should offer something other than treating it as a bastard child," he said.

The forums, organized by the State Planning Agency, are the indirect result of widespread anxiety about possible closing of one or more of the state's eight state hospitals.

The state Department of Human Services, which runs the hospitals, has denied repeatedly that it has any hidden shutdown plans. But a shift in emphasis from big state institutions to community-based programs has been a reality for many years, in Minnesota and other states.

Two hospitals have been closed in the past seven years — Hastings State Hospital in 1977 and Rochester State Hospital in 1982. Critics of the Rochester closing said it was done for political reasons and pushed through far too quickly to assess the consequences and plan for them.

Of the eight remaining hospitals, only Cambridge and Faribault have solely retarded residents. Anoka State Hospital has mentally ill and chemically dependent patients; the others — at Brainard, Fergus Falls, Moose Lake, St. Peter and Willmar — have retarded residents as well as the mentally ill, chemically dependent or both.

The forums are part of a State Planning Agency study ordered by the 1984 Legislature in the wake of two developments that angered many people.

First, Human Services (then the Department of Public Welfare) announced in December a plan to reorganize the hospital system, which many look as playing down some institutions in favor of others. At Moose Lake, one of the assumed less-favored hospitals, employees and civic leaders said they feared the result of the plan would be closure. This would destroy much of the town's economy, they said.
State hospital forums begin

CAMBRIDGE (AP) — When Gloria Habech told of a mentally retarded man who had been happy at Cambridge State Hospital, but unhappy when he was released "out in the field," she received thunderous applause and cheers.

The reception came Wednesday night in Cambridge from some 200 people who gathered to try to head off a possible closing of the state hospital or soften the blow of closure if it comes. Habech, head of the Milwaukee County Welfare Board, was among dozens of people who spoke at the first of nine public forums being held around the state between now and (Forum)

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The plan was scrapped in January as opposition mounted.

Second, worry mounted over the department’s plans for “waivered services” for the retarded, a move that would accelerate the trend away from state hospital care in favor of more “normal” community placement. The department had applied for, and later was granted, a federal waiver to permit use of Medicaid for an array of community services and facilities.

Legislation was introduced to stop the waiver application, but instead of adopting it, lawmakers ordered the state planning study of the hospitals’ future.

The forums, organized by the State Planning Agency, are the indirect result of widespread anxiety about the possible closing of one or more of the Minnesota’s eight state hospitals.

The forum in the Fergus Falls area has been scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 25, at the Detroit Lakes Vocational Technical School from 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m.

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Of the eight remaining hospitals, only Cambridge and Faribault have only retarded residents. Anoka State Hospital has mentally ill and chemically dependent patients. The others — Fergus Falls, Brainerd, Waterloo, Appleton and St. Joseph — are a mix of mentally ill and chemically dependent or both.

The forums are part of a State Planning Agency study ordered by the 1984 Legislature in the wake of two developments that angered many people.
State hospitals

In regard to the Aug. 23 article, "Dozens at forum speak against closing Cambridge State Hospital," it is worth remembering that Minnesota did not build state hospitals to provide jobs for public employees or to provide revenue for nearby businesses. The institutions were built to provide services that were nonexistent in our communities years ago.

Now that our communities have the ability to provide superior services for persons with developmental disabilities, the benefactors of institutionalization are understandably concerned about their own futures. However, to grant public institutions the status of a protected industry would be a travesty, for such protection can exist only at the expense of the disabled. — Elizabeth Carlson, Minneapolis.
MEETING and nobody came?

The State Planning Agency is coming to Brainerd tomorrow night to hold a Town Meeting. They want to know how we feel about the Brainerd State Hospital. They are seeking facts... and will go away with impressions.

In Faribault more than seven hundred concerned townspeople showed up to defend their hospital. In Willmar last week, some four hundred anxious citizens packed the Central Office Building. In both meetings, and seven others like them around the State, the Planning agency is being very impressed by acts... and people.

If it becomes necessary for the State to close one or two hospitals, is it possible they would choose our Brainerd State Hospital with its 400 some residents, 600 plus employees, and $17.5 million payroll? The facts suggest that our Brainerd facility should be the last to go... with its renown for superior care and treatment of the mentally ill in a 14-county region, it's unequalled service to our Indian community, and its statewide treatment of juvenile delinquents.

Yet, these vital services to people in need all over Northern Minnesota are presently threatened on the State carving board!

The facts favor Brainerd State Hospital. But, the State is obviously looking for something more. It may be something as simple as caring. Your presence at tomorrow night's meeting might just be the difference between a sign on the hospital door that reads WELCOME... and one that says: CLOSED... DUE TO LACK OF INTEREST.

opinion DOES COUNT!

SEPTEMBER 24
THE HIGH SCHOOL

Of the Brainerd Area Chamber of Commerce