

COMMUNITY CENTER WORKING GROUP  
Thursday, April 7, 2022

Maple Grove Community Center  
6:30 p.m.

- Meeting** The Meeting was started by Parks and Recreation Director, Chuck Stifter at 6:30 p.m.
- CCWG Members Present** CCWG Members were: Al Madsen, Andy Mielke, Chuck Skajewski, Colin Steen, John Ferm, Joyce Deane, Ken Kumpula, Lee Newman, Lise Spence-Parsons, Martha West, Phil Leith, Rachelle Johnson, and Randy Marchessault.
- CCWG Members Absent** CCWG Members absent were: Bob Joiner, Brett Angell, Deb Stock, Jan Cariveau, Kristy Barnett, Pat Shephard, Ryan Wilson, Steve Fischer, Ted Lyons.
- Also Present** Also present at the meeting were: Heidi Nelson, City Administrator; Chuck Stifter, Parks and Recreation Director; Angie Dehn, Community Center Manager; Aimee Peterson, Recreation Superintendent; and Cara Anderson, Admin Secretary of the Parks & Recreation Department.
- Community Center Tour** Director Stifter led the group on a tour of the community center. The tour highlighted each of the key areas used by the public and pointed out specific repair and renovation needs.
- The tour began with the pool area. It was noted the large slide needs to be replaced and the spray toys in the leisure pool are failing. It was asked if the pool will be rebuilt. The scope and scale of the repairs/remodel will depend on the vote in November. The size of the pools presents a challenge, as more space is needed for adult fitness. Various areas of the roof were identified as leaks in need of repair. The tour continued through the pool locker room areas, where the challenge of the layout was discussed. The general flow of traffic from the pool to the locker rooms was noted. As the locker rooms do not directly enter the pool deck, guests need to walk through a general use open area and the family changing area to get to the pool. Some additional needs are renovations of the locker rooms, as well as an increase in the amount of individual changing stalls. Before leaving the pool area, the tour looked at an unfinished storage space for pool related items. The space is also used for lifeguard breaks and training.
- The tour then moved to the gym. The route to get from the front desk to the gym was pointed out as a challenge. Since anyone

checking in for the gym must go through the front desk, they would then have full access to the community center while taking the route to the gym. As a result, drop-in use for the gym has been hard to manage. Recent operational changes were made to address this by limiting gym use to members only. This is a temporary fix.

During the tour it was asked if solutions to solving the various community center issues have been thought through as the master plan has been developed.

As the tour continued through the ice arenas, it was noted the arenas are home to the second largest youth hockey program in the country. Additionally, the Learn to Skate program is the state's largest skating school and has participants from 17 local communities. The addition of a third sheet of ice would greatly enhance both programs. With the master plan, the two current sheets of ice would have some renovations done to them.

It was inquired what would happen to the Lions Pavilion and playground if the third sheet of ice was added with the master plan. Both would be relocated.

## **Information Sharing**

Director Stifter explained the communication changes related to the sales tax referendum and the master plan. It was shared the project communication will focus on a singular master plan project estimated at \$116 million and any discussion or communication around another lesser project would discontinue to avoid confusion with the public message.

It was reiterated that if the referendum does not pass, the project will shift to a renovation project with a yet to be defined plan.

A comment was made that the 2022 Approved Community Center Budget sheet does not show the full year of 2021 actuals. Director Stifter responded that the 2021 actuals are to be finalized in April.

Director Stifter encouraged the working group to review the main topics within the feasibility study attachment.

Director Stifter stated a combination of memberships and programs make up the daily operations of the community center. He noted aquatics are a big driver for memberships. With the expansion, more offerings in the facility would be possible which would likely increase the number of memberships. Ken Kumpula inquired if the current community center membership rates are reduced for residents. The community center does offer reduced membership rates for residents. The daily drop in fees do not offer a reduced rate.

Rachelle Johnson asked if there has been any discussion on how the levies for the 279 school district might affect the sales tax referendum. She mentioned the property tax increase, 2 school levies, and the sales tax referendum is a lot for people to take in all at once. Ms. Johnson also noted hearing questions within the community regarding why the city hasn't been building up a fund to deal with the renovation and repairs, knowing they would eventually come. She stressed the importance of getting ahead of these sorts of questions.

Director Stifter informed the group there is a maintenance fund as part of the annual budget, and repairs have been made over the years. He noted there are some larger replacement items that are due around the 25-year mark that have been incorporated into the master plan. Recreation Superintendent, Aimee Peterson, reminded the group the sales tax referendum is also for the purpose of expanding the community center to meet the needs of a growing community.

Director Stifter referred the group to the parking analysis attachment. The analysis provided good data on how to plan for the demand on both east and west sides of the master plan.

Martha West brought up how some programming classes were held elsewhere during the peak of the pandemic. She inquired if this could be a possible option if the referendum does not pass. Director Stifter noted some of the challenges that come with use of satellite facilities, but stated this could be an option to consider.

Heidi Nelson, the city administrator, went over three bond run scenarios, explaining the estimated property tax impact of each. The bond issue amount of \$116,000,000 would have resulted in a property tax increase of nearly 25% on a median value home.

As this increased amount is too high, the decision was made to move forward with the sales tax referendum. Ms. Nelson went on to explain the bond issue amount option of \$98,000,000 would still require a high property tax increase of nearly 21%. The minimum investment option of a \$60,000,000 bond is not yet a defined project but would lead to a 12% increase.

Lee Newman brought up the recommendation of including curling in the master plan. He noted there are no curling facilities within the area and it would be a big draw, as it has become a popular sport the past few years.

Director Stifter stated curling was looked at as an option but at the time, costs were getting too high to include it. He also mentioned another location for curling is currently under consideration. He emphasized it is a separate project, funding, and timeline. He showed a map outlining the potential site.

Andy Mielke inquired about peer cities and how they compare. He mentioned these are the cities Maple Grove competes with for residents, services, and businesses. Director Stifter commented that data from comparable cities is being gathered. Ms. Peterson also noted currently having data from studies of community centers in Eagan and Eden Prairie.

A tour of the Plymouth Community Center is tentatively planned for May 19 at 5 p.m. Notifications will be sent out once it is finalized.

A suggestion was made to create small cards which include the QR code for the Growing Together website. These could be handed out by CCWG members to help direct people to the project website.

The next meeting will be on May 5. The meeting was adjourned by Director Stifter at 8:30pm.