

COMMUNITY CENTER WORKING GROUP

Thursday, August 4, 2022

Maple Grove Community Center
6:30 p.m.

- Meeting** The Meeting was started by Parks and Recreation Director, Chuck Stifter at 6:31 p.m.
- CCWG Members Present** CCWG Members were: Brett Angell, Joyce Deane, John Ferm, Steve Fischer, Rachele Johnson, Ken Kumpula, Ted Lyons, Randy Marchessault, Andy Mielke, Lee Newman, Lise Spence-Parsons, Pat Shephard, Colin Steen, Martha West, and Ryan Wilson.
- CCWG Members Absent** CCWG Members absent were: Kristy Barnett, Jan Cariveau, Phil Leith, Al Madsen, Chuck Skajewski, and Deb Stock.
- 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; Cara Anderson, Admin Secretary of the Parks & Recreation Department; and Nancy Blankfard, of HGA (Community Center Architect).
- Welcome and Agenda** Director Stifter welcomed the group. He noted the meeting would include a review of the updated Master Plan for the Community Center Renovation and Expansion project. Additionally, updates on communication efforts would be provided.
- Modified Master Plan Presentation** Nancy Blankfard, representing HGA, presented an updated master plan which included revisions that had been made since the June meeting. Some of the main changes would reduce demolition costs, reuse more of the existing space and current site parking and access, and eliminate one of the gyms. The banquet space would be increased to accommodate 300 seats. Adjustments to the cost estimate were required as current market conditions remain volatile. This resulted in a 15% increase in the estimate.
- Ms. Blankfard went over the comparison chart in the PowerPoint presentation, focusing on the Revised Master Plan June 2, 2022 column and how it compared to the current

facility. The main changes in this revised plan are an increase in overall square footage, increased size to the banquet room, more space for active adults (seniors), reduction in size of the teen center, the addition of a walking track, art rooms, a 3rd ice rink, with team rooms. The Aquatics area would increase, as well as the amount of parking available at the center.

Lee Newman inquired if there would be enough parking and if more could be added. Ms. Blankfard noted the space for parking has been maximized in the revised plan. She also noted the county ramp could be an option if additional parking was needed during certain events.

Ms. Blankfard provided an overview of the updated layout for the upper level. She noted the new construction to the entry area would provide a more welcoming design. She also highlighted the walking track, a 63% growth in active adults' space, staff offices, art space, teen center, meeting rooms, and banquet space. Rachelle Johnson asked for further details about the space for active adults and if it could be rented. Director Stifter explained it was a large space for the senior activities. It would include separate rooms that allowed a quieter place to have multiple programs running at once. The space would include an open kitchenette and have an overall homey feeling to it. Recreation Superintendent Aimee Peterson noted that while senior programs would utilize the space during the weekdays, it would be available for rent in the evenings and on weekends. Martha West noted the teen center was far removed from the main front areas and asked how it would be monitored. Director Stifter responded it would be monitored much like it currently is. The center has a staff member present at all times, as well as roaming building staff to keep an eye on things.

Next, Ms. Blankfard provided an overview of the lower level diagram. The layout includes new aquatics bodies of water and a 34% increase in the indoor aquatic space. There will also be a third sheet of ice added, as well as additional team rooms. She went over the demolition zone and noted it would be smaller than the previous plan. The building would be extended out to make space for the gym and aquatics area.

She then gave a brief overview of the project cost sheet, noting the adjustments made would allow them to still hit their target cost for the full project. Ms. Blankfard also provided cost by amenity details to show the value for each feature.

Ken Kumpula referred to the demo area page and questioned how far out the expanded area would go to the north, citing concerns with proximity to Weaver Lake Road. Director Stifter noted it would expand the extent of the current garden area. Mr. Newman asked what would happen to the Lions pavilion and playground. Ms. Blankfard responded both would be moved.

Ms. Johnson inquired if there had been any thought to move the ice arenas to a new location in order to allow for more square footage for the Community Center expansion. Director Stifter responded it was considered during the early planning stages but due to cost related to land acquisition and the expense of such a facility, we chose not to continue exploring that option. He noted there would be the cost of three offsite ice arenas in addition to the Community Center rebuild and expansion costs. Ms. Blankfard mentioned having all amenities in one location could provide a benefit that other communities don't have. There was further discussion on the idea of moving the ice arenas to a different location. Steve Fischer mentioned it isn't possible to move anything from the arena, rather it would need to be a new build. Colin Steen estimated the project would be over \$150 million.

Ms. Johnson questioned the idea of trying to squeeze too much into too little space and whether the plan was serving the community well. She inquired if the plan would still meet the needs of the community in 20 years. Ted Lyons commented that the Maple Grove population is getting older and suggested needing more space for senior programming in the next 10 years. Ms. Blankfard noted the space for active adults doubles in size with the Master Plan. She also noted there are ways to expand in the future, if needed.

Director Stifter discussed the new and expanded aquatics. The general design would include a leisure pool, and expanded lap pool, and a program pool for fitness. Currently, fitness

programs are offered in the leisure and lap pool. The new design would allow for a designated pool for programs, freeing up the lap and leisure pools for their intended use.

Mr. Lyons commented the importance of having visuals that emphasize the different areas aside from the ice arenas. He noted the benefit of 3D renderings and that an aerial photo would be helpful. There was a discussion around the master play layouts and if they were helpful to see. It was brought up how different audiences might want to see different amenities and it could be beneficial to provide layouts of each main area.

Mr. Fischer noted a goal of the community center working group is to show forth the big picture. It was noted that the community might not be getting the main message of how the half-cent sales tax ensures that both residents and nonresidents share in the cost to reinvest in the Community Center. It has been estimated that 55% of the half-cent sales tax would be paid by nonresidents. Ms. West inquired as to what others have been hearing within their circles. Mr. Steen mentioned he saw a higher percentage of positive response while working the Growing Together booth at the Maple Grove Days Business Expo. Lise Spence-Parsons commented how the responses she received during Chalkfest were more of a 50/50 split. Mr. Fischer noted a similar response at his neighborhood National Night Out event. He stated once he explained the details of the half-cent sales tax, the response shifted to a more positive one. Mr. Newman mentioned he saw a 90% positive response at National Night Out in his neighborhood.

There was a brief discussion about waiting on the expansion/renovation project until the city could acquire Life Time. As the timeframe for Life Time leaving is unknown, the consensus was it is best to move forward rather than putting it off. There was an inquiry as to the timeframe of the project. Director Stifter responded that if the referendum was approved, design work would tentatively begin in 2023 followed by two years of construction completing sometime in 2026.

Ms. West asked Director Stifter ways the working group can best help him and staff. Director Stifter responded that the

group discussions have been beneficial. He also noted the importance of keeping people informed of the facts, to continue sharing the message, and focusing on the amenities.

Angie Dehn provided the group with a communications update for the Community Center project. She noted the main goals of the city's outreach to raise awareness, education, and gain input. A few examples of communication were listed: Growing Together website, social media, print, CCX media, a presence at community events, and info sheets in the utility mailings. Ms. West asked about the possibility of adding a digital flyer to the electronic utility bills in order to reach those who do not receive paper bills.

Ms. Dehn continued by describing how the community outreach includes scheduled project presentations to a number of community groups. These scheduled meetings provide a short presentation of the project and a time for questions and feedback. She noted they have met with nine groups so far, have more meetings scheduled, and some pending. A list of the groups was provided to the Community Center working group. Heidi Nelson asked if there were any groups that should be added to the list. Ms. West suggested homeowners' associations. Ms. Dehn responded that due to the quantity of homeowner's associations the thought was to invite them to one meeting at the Community Center. Ms. Spence-Parsons suggested the library. Ms. Peterson agreed this would be a good location to place various pieces of literature. She also mentioned the remaining concerts/movies at Town Green would be good opportunities to reach the community.

Andy Mielke asked what the main message to the groups has been. He noted the importance of highlighting the 55% paid by nonresidents. Ted Lyons agreed and mentioned noticing some people seem confused about the referendum, thinking it is a raise in property tax. Ms. Nelson responded that the breakdown of funding from the local option sales tax has been a key part of the presentations, as well as keeping the focus on the vision of the master plan.

Ms. Johnson inquired as to how the remaining \$26 million would be funded. Ms. Nelson responded the city is continuing

to pursue state bonding. The session will wrap up in May of 2023. Ms. Spence-Parsons inquired about the possibility of obtaining federal funding. Ms. Nelson responded it is more difficult to obtain, however there are some programs out there and the city continues to look for opportunities.

The meeting was closed out at 7:45 p.m. with a reminder of the next meeting would be canceled but encouraged all to attend the planned public open house on September 7th.