
MINUTES OF MEETING

PROJECT: Cedar Rapids and Linn County, IA
Feasibility Study for a State of the Art Multi-component Community Center / Recreation Complex

PROJECT NO.: 2007-014

DATE / TIME / PLACE: 30 January 2008 / 5:30pm / Ambroz Recreation Center Stakeholder Meeting

PRESENT: Tom Poulos / Williams Architects
Stacy Snapp / WA
Chris Dropinski / GreenPlay
Gregg Calpino / JJR
AJ Monroe / JJR
Tom Saxen / PLAY
Stakeholders (see attached)

COPIES TO: All Present Named Above
Allen Witt / Hall & Hall Engineers
Brian Vogel / H&H
Ron Vine / Leisure Vision

PREPARED BY: Stacy Snapp / WA

DATE PREPARED: 15 February 2008

NOTE: These minutes shall be considered an accurate account of the above meeting unless corrections or additions are communicated to Williams Architects, Ltd. within ten (10) days of the date prepared.

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

The purpose of this meeting was to get early input from the stakeholders prior to a public Open House. The information obtained from this session will be used as background information in formulating questions for a household survey. It will also serve as early data in preparation for the Process Driven Decision Making (PDDM) Open House Input Meetings.

Phil Wasta gave a brief explanation about PLAY and their efforts over the last 2 ½ years which led to this feasibility study. Tom Poulos introduced the design team's Work Plan and explained the 9-month process for the feasibility study. The following discussion was facilitated by Chris Dropinski and represents ideas shared by those present.

1. Strengths of Current Parks and Recreation

- Outdoor Pools
- Evenly distributed facilities
- Good Partnerships: sharing, access between the colleges, high schools and city
- Well used, high demand
- Priced adequately for patrons
- Tuma, etc: Sports complex parks, also in Marion

2. Weaknesses of Current Parks and Recreation

- Indoor Aquatics: antiquated 5-lane pool; overheated, under-funded
- Older, outdated
- Overused
- No Full-sized Gym; Cedar Rapids has 3 gymnasiums: this one at Ambroz and two at Time Check.
- Lack of meeting space for non-profit organizations
- No / Little indoor soccer space
- No lit stadiums – only at the high schools
- No “Wow! / Cool!” factor
- No classroom space for non-sports activities such as the cultural arts: pottery, painting, etc.
- Lack of therapeutics for an older clientele, ADA access
- Parking at all facilities, especially at Witwer
- No interaction between venues serving the elderly, recreation, communication; the need to see intergenerational activity; get the synergy of the ages
- No organized baseball tournament complex
- Quality of life is an economic driver which helps bring people to the community
- Young baseball leagues
 - No playable diamonds on the SE side
 - 200 coaches will convene at Kennedy in the spring to try to schedule tournament

play for fewer diamonds in Cedar Rapids and Linn County than what is needed.

- Almost every sport has a lack of practice / tournament space; most teams can't get one time slot per week either indoors or outdoors
- Indoor tennis is nonexistent; those who are interested must go to private clubs
- Limited number of outdoor tennis courts
- Limited spectator space / seating at most facilities. This is a key factor for revenue generators; people coming to watch need a place to sit
- Linn County Participation: Center Point is building Frost Park because there are no baseball complexes in northern Linn County.
- The north side of Cedar Rapids is missing an indoor recreation facility
- High schools are spread out but recreation facilities are not
- Bender is the only pool
- YMCA's are good facilities but they are not public
- Programs are available at the schools for children but not for ages above that
- Schools have little time available for outside leagues to use their facilities; schools are not open to the public; anyone wishing to use a school gym must have a connection to the school to do so.
- Schools are maxed out on pool usage
- Winter time space: There is no place for unprogrammed activities without a membership; there is no place indoors to walk or workout
- Plan for tomorrow not today
- Aegon brought jobs to Cedar Rapids but the people wouldn't move here because there's nothing here
- Cedar Rapids has no "wow" factor – no rock wall, sports, venue for older parents, etc.

3. Opportunities / Challenges

a. Program Space and Community Space

- Not much (in quantity), not easily accessible
- Renaissance Group study in '94 looked at outdoor gathering space and determined that Cedar Rapids has NONE
- Larger banquet / multi-use space is needed; Hotels serve 300-400 people
- Build in Event Planning
- Seniors in the 55-75 age group see a hole in provisions for activities; there is no

space for activities

b. Site: How to be Turf-Less

- Has to be a Regional Linn County Approach – no single entity can fund and sustain it
- Final presentations should be to Linn County and other City Councils too
- Find a neutral sites for the process and the product
- Who is served? / how is it funded?
- Do a competitor analysis to show opportunity for additional programs to grow with current private offerings; will be crucial for regional success.
- Opportunity for less turf wars; “We get along.”
- Transportation:
 - Public transit to the site: should be on a bus route
 - Off 380
- Current facilities are based on what was given or unused; therefore they don’t meet needs; the buildings are not accessible. “This has to change.”
- Cedar Rapids must look beyond what is donated (ie, Ambroz).
- How is it paid for and used? Must be a joint venture (with Cedar Rapids, Linn County, outlying areas)
- Broaden base to get quality (may be difficult but there are opportunities).
- Publicly accessible, large site
- The park / recreation department has been a slave of donations in the past, thus the facilities are not used; they are not located where they should be.
- Do a combined private and public venture since the perception is that private facilities are better maintained and managed. If so, fair procedures would need to be established in terms of priority for scheduling
- Ice Arena – actual revenues have not come near projections
- In the late 80’s, early 90’s, a facility (similar to this one) was proposed along river; the idea was killed because the YMCA said, why pay taxes to build a facility? For this project, balance to complement existing local amenities.
- Design with an ethic of sustainability environmentally; LEED; be a leader in environmental issues; use renewable energy and efficient systems
- This is a moment of opportunity to be visionary; cross jurisdictions, give a “wow” factor, be green. A lot is in the process – if the process is done well, we can get there. “The physical process must be great.”
- Get beyond a being a “bohemian” community.

- Failed efforts in the past were from not being inclusive – make a place where all the people come together – Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Hiawatha; the challenge is to find a site that serves Linn County.
- Get people to see the value for themselves and for others
- Establish a master plan and do phasing rather than build it all initially
- Potential cross-usage with faith-based organizations who are also building gyms
- Challenges: some people are against everything.

End of Minutes of Meeting