
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: 31 January 2008 / 10:00am / 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.

Tom Saxen gave a brief explanation about PLAY and their efforts over the last 2 ½ years which led to this feasibility study. Gregg Calpino 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
- Ice Arena – last year introduced figure skating, hockey to the CR area
- Baseball Stadium
- New YMCA downtown
- Miles of walking and running trails, well maintained
- Volunteer leagues are thriving but lacking facilities
- Nice outdoor soccer complex: divisional tournaments brought 230-260 teams last spring and 100 in the fall. The economic impact over these 2-3 days was approximately half a million dollars. Baseball and basketball have great programming but need similar venues, which could produce similar economic impacts.
- Health and wellness opportunities at the hospitals and the YMCA
- Cedar Rapids' geographical location, Iowa City corridor
- Leadership support – Strength of working together
- A place for family

2. Weaknesses of Current Parks and Recreation

- Indoor Aquatics
- Gymnasiums
- Accessibility – everything is at different locations
- ADA accessibility
- Vocational activities for older adults
- Sports activities for the older adult: "Older people want to sweat." Granny Basketball was started using Xavier's facility since it required a 2-court gymnasium. The venue was then taken to Des Moines due to a lack of available facilities in CR.
- Non-traditional programs such as woodworking
- No indoor activities for kids in the winter
- Recruitment

- Hard time getting something done – overcome inertia. “Get past the ‘No’”.
- Cities need to work together – Marion, Hiawatha; get beyond the turf wars

3. Opportunities / Challenges

a. Geographic Location

- Accessibility to the rest of the city and satellite communities
- Should not duplicate services provided by the YMCA
- The Northeast side has employers and is growing; has fewer recreational sites currently
- Transportation is a challenge. The site should be accessible from every type: public transit, bike, foot, car.
- Marketing tool – how many people live in Cedar Rapids and drive to Iowa City for work and shopping, and vice versa; yet they don’t like driving far for recreation offerings. Ten minute drive time perception.
- Trail connections, green and sustainable; take a holistic look
- Trail creates a North / South corridor so connect into that; take what we’ve built and expand off that system
- Current lack of parking. All facilities need parking.
- The senior population needs a central location to drive to
- Where on the corridor to draw Iowa City folk?

b. Program Space and Community Space

- The foundation and core idea behind this 15 in 5 initiative is the replacement of Ambroz, Witwer & Bender. All three facilities have needs. The core idea behind this project is to combine all three into one facility.
- Need for young adult offerings: Rockwell has discovered that young new people need something community wide; bigger cities offer lacrosse, cricket. CR needs something to retain this age group, which has the highest turnover rate.
- Intergenerational is key – create a canvas that welcomes everyone. It is important for people to be with all ages. They don’t want to feel like an old person going to Witwer and painting, etc. A multi-generational facility will help to break down that barrier.
- Need for a community gathering space
- Biggest thing missing in the vehicle community is somewhere to gather as a

community. For instance, we have a game at the ball field, get in the car, and eat somewhere else. We don't have places to sit and watch people or meet others.

- Grandparents raising kids don't know what to do; it is difficult to have a place to take the kids and meet with their friends too.
- Sensitivity to cultural / demographic make-up of the community: Consider at-risk families. Lots of scholarships are available for kids but not for the whole family. A successful multi-generational facility was seen in Denver.
- Activities are needed for kids while parents recreate
- Need to use good programming in different times of the day: Seniors in the morning; kids in the evening, etc. Program the spaces to serve multiple functions.
- Encourage interaction between adults and youth. One church has a program where older adults taught kids to change oil, and they saw a transformation in way adults viewed kids and vice versa.
- How to get the word out: do online surveys for young adults.
- Get the message out. How do you inspire people to fill out surveys? Marketing is needed.
- The Multi-generational Recreation Center in Iowa City has a good atmosphere; college age is mixed with other ages. Having a gym is good idea; people of all ages play basketball leagues, etc.
- How to reach out to young adults: offer a free week pass
- Wellness is a greater need than sports
- YMCA offers \$1-2 million to financial assistance to families; 50% goes to the children, so the other 50% must go to adults; networking and marketing is needed.
- Goal is to provide funding to low income
- Offer drop-in baby-sitting while parents work out
- North Liberty: built a pool and wellness center connected to the library – this changed the community by bringing people together. Mom heads to the library while kids go to classes. This creates a non-threatening environment. Keep broad programming.
- Persons of color may not come to an Open House. We need to go to them for their input, to hear their needs. People speak on their behalf rather than them speaking for themselves.
- YMCA serves the Wellington Heights neighborhood

- People feel like their voice won't be heard. Maybe need 2 facilities – not leave core neighborhoods.
- People can't afford transportation to the YMCA from not too far away
- Consider using existing facilities such as Coe College, which is next to an at-risk neighborhood. They have 10-12 tennis courts which sit empty most of the time. Also utilize Kirkwood & Mount Mercy. "Benefits to the community with this."
- See the larger community benefit behind this facility: use this facility to create community.
- The city is challenged with communication. Need to reach out. Don't assume people will know.
- Aegon experiences the challenges of moving people here – they don't want to come.
- Establish lines of communication and core communicators.
- The problem with the Ice Center process was that one public hearing was held, during which lots of negativity was voiced. Then there was silence on the topic, then the building was suddenly built. No one received any updates or knew what was happening. This project needs to build a communication network. Utilize web services.
- Aegon wants to tie in with public offerings for wellness components rather than build those facilities on their complex.
- There is a great need for ball fields that are open for use. Leagues consisted of 167 teams last year and 200+ this year from New Hampton to Mt. Pleasant. They already have cut out 40-50 teams. Leagues are affecting 20,000 kids. They don't have a location to host tournaments which results in lost revenue for Cedar Rapids and the surrounding communities.
- Spectator seating is needed, and that will help convince Linn County to be involved. People from the soccer competitions stayed in hotels throughout Linn County; it was not just Cedar Rapids that gained financially. Swim meets could do the same and offer competitive aquatics.
- Environmental building.

End of Minutes of Meeting