

Minutes

Audio Tape No. 659

The City Council of the City of Leawood, Kansas, met for a Special Call Meeting at City Hall, 4800 Town Center Drive, at 5:45 P.M., on Monday, March 20, 2006. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

Councilmembers present: Gary Bussing, Jim Rawlings, Scott Gullede, Mike Gill, James E. Taylor, Sr., and Gregory Peppes.

Councilmembers absent: Lou Rasmussen and Debra Filla.

Staff present: Scott Lambers, City Administrator
Patty Bennett, City Attorney
Joe Johnson, Public Works Director
Brian Anderson, Superintendent of Parks
Kim Curran, Superintendent of Recreation
Deb Harper, City Clerk
Christy Wise, Deputy City Clerk

Others present: Steve Martens, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Dick Fuller, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Amy Vlastic, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Jacquie McKinney, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Mark Mergen, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Alice Hawk, Leawood Foundation and Historic Commission
Mary Tearney, Leawood Arts Council
Dennis Reynolds, Planning Commission

1. Opening Remarks

Mayor Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. She welcomed Councilmembers, Staff, and committee members to the Special Work Session. Introductions were made by those present.

Mayor Dunn stated the purpose of the Work Session, proposed by Councilmember Bussing, is to discuss a potential future community center. The issue has been on the Capital Improvement Program [CIP] for a number of years and in January was discussed at a joint Work Session between the Governing Body and the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. During a subsequent Goals and Objectives Work Session, it was decided that a Governing Body Work Session should be held in order to determine directives.

City Administrator Scott Lambers stated a consensus among the City Council was not obtained during prior discussions of whether to proceed with consideration of constructing a community center at this time. If the decision is to go forward, the Goals and Objectives will be modified prior to adoption this evening. The facility needs to be defined in terms of what it will contain as well as where it will be located. Staff has identified possible locations for the facility. If a central location is desired, the decision has been achieved by default through acquisition of the tract of land on Tomahawk Creek Parkway currently targeted for the Justice Center and possible fire substation. A determination will also need to be made whether the facility will include indoor aquatics.

Councilmember Bussing arrived at 6:05 P.M.

2. Discuss potential future Community Center

Mayor Dunn agreed with the central location suggestion from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. She stated there is urgency associated with deciding upon a location as it could change the footprint of the Justice Center, which will be designed within the next year.

Councilmember Taylor inquired about the acreage of the Tomahawk Creek Parkway site. Mr. Lambers stated it is 11.7 acres.

Regarding the proposed fire substation, Mr. Lambers stated land will be reserved for this possibility. The substation will house an ambulance bay and new aerial ladder truck which is needed due to upcoming high-rise activity in the area. He confirmed for Councilmember Rawlings there is sufficient space for all three structures if it is decided to place a community center in this location. The footprint impact of the Justice Center will be minimized by creating a multi-story facility with the possibility of tiered parking to accommodate the community center.

Square footage considerations for the Justice Center have not yet been determined, however it will include a basement and two stories if the community center is also placed on site. Mr. Lambers estimated the Justice Center will require between 20,000-30,000 square feet.

Councilmember Gullede suggested using the currently city-owned 4 acres on Tomahawk Creek Parkway for the Justice Center. Mayor Dunn stated there is a covenant running with the donated land restricting the presence of criminals.

Mr. Lambers informed Councilmember Rawlings there would be security issues associated with combining the Justice and community centers into one building.

Councilmember Gullede inquired if the possibility had been explored of utilizing the Blue Valley Mission Trails School building. Mayor Dunn stated Tom Trigg, Superintendent of Blue Valley School District, has stated there is no thought in the foreseeable future to abandon the school.

Councilmember Gill requested to hear comments from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board concerning what is envisioned for the community center. He also asked for information regarding similar facilities, both public and private, in the greater community area. Community utilization is a concern with other entities planning on building similar facilities, such as The Church of the Resurrection, Overland Park, and Blue Valley.

Councilmember Peppes felt more research should be done before making a final decision on the community center.

Councilmember Taylor emphasized the need to determine whether indoor aquatics will be incorporated into the community center as it will impact square footage and parking needs. He suggested relying upon research and recommendations from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

On behalf of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, Chair Steve Martens stated the proposed community center warrants further research by way of a feasibility study and citizen input. The fact that neighboring municipalities also have community centers should not deter the City from pursuing the aspect of providing the same for Leawood citizens. He reiterated the Board's viewpoint of a centrally located facility.

Mayor Dunn stated she has visited the Sylvester Powell Community Center in Mission, Kansas and was enlightened by the fact the facility utilized only 5 acres even though it seems much larger. Mr. Marten noted comparisons supplied by Staff reveals the average community center site to be 4-5 acres with 60-80 thousand square feet based upon whether there is an indoor pool.

Leawood Arts Council Chair Mary Tearney stated 25% of Mission residents belong to their community center. She highlighted details of the Mission facility such as fee payment policies and parking.

Planning Commissioner Dennis Reynolds stated the Sylvester Powell Community Center has a dedicated arts & crafts room which is heavily used. A feasibility study would determine if this type of programming is needed. Mr. Reynolds stated Grandview, Missouri has a new community center although it is on a smaller scale.

According to a recent population breakdown, Councilmember Taylor recalled 12% of Leawood residents are over age 55. He verified with Ms. Tearney that nonresidents are also allowed to use the Mission facility at a slightly higher fee.

Councilmember Taylor amplified the need for a feasibility study. It was clarified that a Needs Assessment will be performed in 2007 followed by a feasibility study. A determination has not been made as to who will conduct the Needs Assessment.

Councilmember Bussing requested to hear input from the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. Councilmember Gulledge agreed that citizen input is needed to determine if a community center is needed in Leawood.

Mayor Dunn discussed information that will be obtained from a Needs Assessment. She reminded that a prior assessment performed for Ironwoods Park differed from the actual finished product.

Alice Hawk of the Leawood Foundation and Historic Commission stated it would be a mistake to omit the aquatic component from the community center. As a prior swimming instructor at the Sylvester Powell Community Center, she stated the amenity was very well used by all age groups.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board member Kim Vlastic agreed with Ms. Hawk. Many of her friends and neighbors patronize other facilities for use of a swimming pool and/or winter swimming lessons. Ms. Vlastic stressed that Leawood is in need of more programming for children as many citizens are put on very long waiting lists in an attempt to enroll at other community centers. There is also a shortage of water aerobic classes as there are simply not enough pools to handle the demand.

Councilmember Gill voiced if a community center is agreed upon, it absolutely must have aquatics. He listed features such as work-out rooms, group activities, sport courts, running tracks, and parking facilities that will also need to be determined. If built, the center should be on a large scale. Councilmember Gill stated he is not interested in a boutique-size facility that will not serve the community well. However, first and foremost, the question of whether these facilities are already available to Leawood citizens must be answered in order to avoid redundant services.

Councilmember Peppes expressed confidence in Staff's ability to research the competition factor and suggested giving them direction to do so.

Superintendent of Parks Brian Anderson stated current programming in the City Hall building, such as yoga, has the capability to grow larger with more space. He also pointed out that in the past Staff has inquired about using the indoor gymnasium of the Church of the Resurrection for basketball and volleyball programs, however they have their own leagues and could not accommodate the City.

Mr. Reynolds stated he has meet with a design team regarding a 100,000 sq. ft. indoor facility for Manhattan, Kansas. Through the design process, emphasis is often placed upon providing unique programming rather than specific physical space.

Mayor Dunn asked Mr. Reynolds to compare the Overland Park and Manhattan facilities. The Overland Park center is slightly smaller at 90,000 sq. ft. with a similar mix of meeting rooms, aquatics, and gymnasiums.

Ms. Tearney stated community centers should be a place where an entire family can go with activities available for each age group. Legacy Park Community Center in Lee's Summit, Missouri has recently put in a daycare center for small children.

Mr. Martens informed Councilmember Taylor that a timeline for constructing the center has not been determined, however it is forecast in the CIP for 2011-2012. The advisory board felt discussions should begin at this point due to the large scale of the project.

Mayor Dunn reiterated the importance of timing as the Justice Center is scheduled for 2008. A consensus should be made if a central location is desired. She noted the timeline of the CIP is directed by bonds already issued in an attempt to keep finances level. More research should be performed prior to making a final decision.

Based upon the map of available land provided by Staff, Mayor Dunn asked the Governing Body for opinions regarding a potential location for the community center.

Councilmember Gill agreed with the central location. He also proposed combining resources with other taxing districts and building a joint community center. Mr. Taylor reported a collaboration effort was discussed approximately 1½ years ago between Staff and the Blue Valley Recreation Commission, whose center is currently under construction at 151st Street and Lamar Avenue.

Councilmember Rawlings verified with Mr. Lambers that a Needs Assessment including a feasibility analysis would take approximately two years to complete. Discussions regarding estimated construction costs, operations, and revenue assumptions will then take place. Mr. Lambers stated the facility, if constructed, will not pay for itself and will require subsidy much like the golf course. If a location can be targeted, citizens will be able to identify how often they would use the facility on the Needs Assessment. The earliest the project could be accelerated, based upon the CIP, would be 2009 or 2010, with only half of the funding available if an aquatic component is included.

Discussion took place regarding costs associated with reserving land on the Justice Center site for the community center.

Councilmember Gulledge voiced favor for a central location and suggested the City Park on Lee Boulevard as another possible site for the center. He also commented that by year 2011, demographics could change and allow availability of the Mission Trails Elementary School building. Mr. Lambers informed the City Park is primarily flood plain. With Councilmember Taylor advising a flood plain could be built, Councilmember Gulledge stated he did not want to discount the possibility of the City Park location. It would make economic sense to have the outdoor aquatics facility next to the community center.

Councilmember Bussing disagreed with the comparisons made between the development of IRONHOSE Golf Course and considerations given to the community center. The flood plain construction at IRONHORSE significantly enhanced the value of surrounding homes. He voiced opposition to identifying a tract of land for a community center at this time as a more strategic approach should be used to decide upon a location.

Councilmember Bussing also opposed investing in a Needs Assessment or feasibility study, stating we already have the needed information regarding desires of citizens. He also stated it is not appropriate for the City to subsidize our residents' use of the facility when the same services are available in the private sector.

Mayor Dunn stated it is very important to be open and honest with citizenry during the Needs Assessment in letting them know the community center will take their tax dollars to subsidize. Mr. Lambers advised a detailed subsidy requirement will not be identified until completion of the feasibility study.

Mayor Dunn reviewed that Staff will survey currently available services with further discussion regarding a Needs Assessment occurring during the budget hearings.

Mr. Lambers stated the Needs Assessment will provide guidance in terms of how to meet the intense desires of citizens. This information will help the Governing Body determine if a feasibility analysis is warranted. As the timeframe for designing the Justice Center is moving closer, a decision regarding the central location should soon be made.

Councilmember Taylor and Mr. Lambers discussed the fact that if land is reserved for the community center on the Tomahawk Creek Parkway site and a future decision to change the location of the facility is made, the acreage put aside could be used for other public purposes. Even though minor costs will be incurred by adjusting the Justice Center footprint, it would be wise to keep rather than sell the land as the city is becoming land-locked. Mayor Dunn stated a 20-year time frame would have to pass before consideration was given to selling the land obtained through condemnation.

Councilmember Peppes verified with Mr. Lambers the land will be maximized for future public use, be it a community center or another facility. Surface parking could initially be used for the Justice Center and replaced with structured parking when the remaining land is developed. Mayor Dunn stated building plans will be discussed upon hiring a designer for the Justice Center in 2007.

Mr. Lambers highlighted issues to be determined by the Governing Body as: 1) Will the community center, if wanted, be located on the Tomahawk Creek Parkway site? 2) If not, what do we do with the additional four acres? 3) What to do with the land on Lee Boulevard if the current police station is abandoned, which is his recommendation. Mr. Lambers stated future Work Sessions will be held on these topics. He added these decisions are contingent upon acquiring a title for the tract of land on Tomahawk Creek Parkway, which is fast approaching.

Councilmember Taylor noted the City also owns property on 104th Street and State Line Road. Mayor Dunn stated as Leawood is 58 years old and currently 2/3 built-out, it is essential to maximize remaining land with prudent planning.

Mr. Reynolds confirmed for Mr. Lambers the population of Manhattan, Kansas as 40,000. This number is close to the estimated population for Leawood at the time of ultimate built-out. The Manhattan community center is roughly 100,000 sq. ft. with a current cost estimate of \$30,000-million, which will be downscaled to \$20,000-million.

Councilmember Bussing requested Staff to complete the survey on existing facilities, utilization, and costs before the next discussion of the matter occurs. Mr. Lambers stated the information will be available at the time of budget hearings in order to discuss a Needs Assessment for 2007.

Councilmember Gill also requested operating information such as subsidies, revenue, and losses for surrounding facilities.

Councilmember Gullede stated he would like to continue exploring location options.

There being no further business, Mayor Dunn adjourned the Work Session at 7:20 P.M.

Christy Wise, Recording Deputy City Clerk