

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Leawood, Kansas, met for a Special Call Meeting at City Hall, 4800 Town Center Drive, at 6:00 P.M., on Monday, August 4, 2008. Mayor Peggy Dunn presided.

Councilmembers present: Gary Bussing, Jim Rawlings, James Azeltine, Julie Cain, Gregory Peppes, Lou Rasmussen, Debra Filla, and Mike Gill.

Councilmembers absent: None.

Staff present:

Scott Lambers, City Administrator	Kathy Rogers, Finance Director
Patty Bennett, City Attorney	Chris Claxton, P&R Director
Kim Curran P&R Superintendent	Joe Johnson Public Works Director
Brian Anderson, Parks Superintendent	Richard Coleman, Comm. Dev. Dir.
Deb Mansfield, City Clerk	Pam Gregory, Deputy City Clerk

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Members:

Karen Reimer, Chair	Amy Vlastic
Mark Mergen	Jacquie McKinney
Rod Crawford	Bob Wright
Doug Stevens	

Others Present: Ron Vine, Vice President, ETC Institute
Kevin Jeffries, President, Leawood Chamber of Commerce
Mary Tearney, Chair, Leawood Arts Council
Alice Hawk, Chair, Leawood Foundation

Opening Remarks

Mayor Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:15 P.M. Introductions were made by those present.

Parks and Recreation Director Chris Claxton stated Ron Vine, ETC Institute, completed a feasibility study to survey the need for a Community Center in Leawood. There are four components to Phase I:

- Develop project overview
- Market Analysis
- Citizen Participation
- Community Survey

The Market Analysis is still in progress; this consists of the demographics in the area, national trends, population, and the different types of activities people in the area are participating in. Councilmember Azeltine joined the meeting at 6:20 P.M.

Mr. Vine stated the ETC Institute was a public policy market research firm, located in Olathe, Kansas. He noted 95% of their work was governmental, with 5% being non-profit work. He gave an overview of the results regarding:

- Current utilization of indoor space
- Utilized priority space
- How often they would attend
- What they were willing to pay
- How supportive they are of the site

They typically administer surveys by mailings; however, if there are not enough surveys returned, they follow up with phone calls. A random sample of 2,000 surveys was sent by mail with electronic voice calls to let residents know the survey would be coming. They anticipated receiving 300-400 completed; however, received over 700. The return rate was substantially over 30%. They are then divided into category by which they respond. Example: How many men, women, which ward they live in, whether they are currently using indoor space, etc. There can be major differences in responses of households with or without children.

Mr. Vine stated they were not there to express their views, only the views of the citizens. The average household size in the survey response was 2.99 people. The average household size, according to the census, is 2.94 people.

Councilmember Cain confirmed with Mr. Vine that the surveys were only distributed to people ages 18 and older.

Major findings of the study included that 60% of the households currently use some form of indoor facilities.

Councilmember Bussing referred to the last paragraph in the memorandum from Ms. Claxton and asked what the criteria was for determining enough interest to move forward. Ms. Claxton stated they were expecting to have one or two additional work sessions, and this didn't include everything from Phase I. It would be a cumulative approach, based on the four components. Some people were more favorable to the concept than others, and some wanted additional information.

Mr. Vine stated it was Council's decision whether there was enough information collected in order to proceed. Two things that were clear from the survey; there is very little difference between wards, and there are significant differences between households with and without children. Households with children (at least one person under the age of 18) were more in favor of the project. Women were substantially more supportive than men.

Councilmember Bussing noted he would be more comfortable if there could be a set of metrics everyone could understand as they move through the process. For example: return on investment, etc. Mr. Bussing felt this was a book of “data” and requested more information for Phase II. Ms. Claxton stated there was consistency through all four wards regarding the top four or five amenities of choice.

Mr. Vine stated 60% of the citizens of Leawood were currently using some type of indoor facility. This number is higher than what they would normally see. Approximately 30% felt the facility they were using was meeting their needs, and approximately 30% were not in favor of the project.

The five main spaces needed in the facility were: an indoor aquatic facility, gymnasium, cardiovascular fitness area, aerobic area, and an indoor walking track. The number one space they wanted to see was the indoor walking track.

Generally, the main types of water space families with children are interested in are; family oriented swimming and swim instruction. Households without children were interested in a whirlpool, dry sauna, and lap lanes.

When asked who the facility should serve, the response was: families, youth, senior adults, etc. 87% felt the facility should serve families.

When asked how often the respondent’s would visit the center, approximately 40% stated they would use it several times per week. 19% stated they would use it once per week. If the facility is not used weekly, it won’t generate the type of income needed. 18% stated they would never use it and 14% less than once per month. This equals to approximately 30% - 32% stating they wouldn’t be using the facility.

When asked their preferred way of paying to use the facility, close to 50% felt it should be paid through an annual pass, since this is the most cost effective. 16% stated they would not be willing to pay to use the center with another 16% stating they would pay per visit. Generally, people who pay per visit don’t use it often.

When asked how much they would be willing to pay, generally, this stayed within the context mentioned above.

When asked what percentage of the facility they felt should be tax supported and what percentage should be fee supported, 34% stated fees from users should pay the majority of costs and taxes pay the remaining. 24% stated taxes should pay the majority of costs and fees from users pay the remaining costs. 29% felt it should be paid entirely through user fees. These people are opposed to the facility and feel they shouldn’t have to pay taxes for it.

Mr. Vine noted page 20 of the survey results and stated 69% of respondents indicated they are either very supportive (48%) or somewhat supportive (21%) of the potential site being on land currently owned by the City, located at 117th and Tomahawk Parkway.

Mr. Vine stated 39% of respondents were not willing to pay additional property tax funding. 2% stated they didn't know. The remaining 59% stated they would pay additional property taxes at some level.

When asked how respondents would vote if a tax increase with the dollar amount they would support was included in a future election, 32% stated they would vote against it, 35% would vote in favor, with an additional 20% that *might* vote in favor.

Councilmember Rawlings referred to the chart on page 22 and asked how this compared with other surveys they had done. Mr. Vine stated the respondents voting against it were higher than what they would normally see on a successful election, and those voting in favor were a little lower.

Rod Crawford, P&R Advisory Board member, asked how many respondents would vote against any type of tax increase. Mr. Vine stated generally it would be between 10% - 20%.

Councilmember Azeltine asked if the survey revealed how the current programs they were operating would "fit in" with the new Community Center. Mr. Vine stated they didn't ask that particular question; however, the number one thing people consider as a need that is unmet, is adult fitness. This is the fastest growing market and the reason there are currently so many facilities being built.

Ms. Claxton referred to page 3 of the summary and noted there were people currently using Leawood facilities. Mr. Vine stated of the 60% using some sort of indoor facility, over half stated they were using private fitness clubs. Leawood Parks & Recreation facilities were at 28%.

Councilmember Filla confirmed with Mr. Vine that 1/3 of the respondents felt their needs were currently being met with some sort of fitness facility; however, Mr. Vine stated when some of them realize what types of programs are going to be offered in this facility, they will typically change their minds.

Ms. Filla confirmed with Ms. Claxton the City would be opening this to non-Leawood residents in order to maximize usage. Ms. Filla asked if the community was the driving force behind this facility, or if it was staff. She asked how they could determine who was truly going to be "excited" about it and what the emphasis was in order to move forward. Mr. Vine referred to page 55 of the summary; those that were currently using indoor facilities (24.2%), would almost double if the City builds the new center (49.4%). People that are currently using indoor facilities are more likely to vote in favor. This may be a reason to consider the next step in moving forward.

Ms. Filla confirmed with Ms. Claxton there were approximately 30% non-Leawood residents currently using the City pool.

The number one thing, nationwide, Parks & Recreation agencies can provide is public health and fitness programs. This is citizen driven; there is approximately 1/3 opposed to it, 1/3 in favor, and 1/3 not sure.

Councilmember Peppes referred to the 57% of respondents that were already in private facilities, and felt approximately 30% were unsure or not satisfied and may be willing to come to this facility. Mr. Vine stated it wasn't 57% of everyone; however, was 57% of the 60% that were currently using any indoor facility.

Councilmember Rawlings asked when comparing the five areas of fitness, (indoor aquatic facility, gymnasium, cardiovascular fitness area, aerobic area, and indoor walking track) asked what amount of square footage would be required and if there would be enough parking available. Mr. Lambers stated when considering the site proposed, parking would be a serious issue and would only be resolved through structured parking, which is expensive. The gymnasium is the only component that would impact this, due to sports teams coming in and out of the parking lot at the same time.

Mr. Vine stated if the City doesn't build the aquatic component for recreation and fitness, they shouldn't build it. The recreational component (slides, etc.) heavily appeals to households with young children.

Mr. Lambers stated in order to proceed, they needed to have the market analysis completed, and then have another joint meeting in October, 2008. Following this, a work session would need to be held with only the Governing Body to decide the next step, which has potential financial implications that would need to be incorporated into the 2010 budget. The market analysis is something needed to evaluate which facilities were currently located within 7-10 miles, and what amenities they are providing.

Councilmember Bussing stated he would like to have the following information available at a future meeting: evaluation criteria in metrics, the approximate costs of construction, operating costs, and how much revenue it is expected to generate to offset expected costs. He also wanted a cross-tab of people currently using a facility, and what they are dissatisfied with. Ms. Claxton stated they didn't have that information.

Councilmember Azeltine requested that the market analysis take into consideration fee based programs currently existing within the Parks & Recreation Department.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 P.M.

Pam Gregory, Recording Deputy City Clerk