

**PROCEEDINGS OF
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WEST BLOOMFIELD
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Activities Room
West Bloomfield, Michigan**

**Thursday, March 10, 2022
6:00 PM**

APPROVED

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 PM by Chairman Brooks

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Robert Brooks
Secretary Vincent Kirkwood
Treasurer Terrance Adams
Commissioner Merv Aronoff
Commissioner David Barash
Commissioner John Erich

Excused Absence: Commissioner Sally Wenczel

Staff Present: Jennifer Tucker, Executive Director
Kelly Hyer, Recreation Superintendent
Joe Ketchum, Parks Superintendent
Pat Helson, Administrative Assistant
Carrie Manning, Recording Secretary

Public: Robert Stempien, Plante Moran CRESA
Jaime Neher, Neumann Smith Architects

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC FORUM - None presented

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Aronoff seconded by Commissioner Barash to approve the agenda.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Absent: 1

Motion Carried: 6-0

ITEM 6 - Presentation by Robert Stempien of Plante Moran CRESA and Jaime Neher of Neumann Smith Architects regarding the Strategic Plan and Recreation Activities Center Needs Assessment Update

Mr. Stempien presented a feasibility study regarding the need and potential costs for an 80,000 square foot recreation and activities center. Mr. Stempien presented metrics and a study of six nearby community/senior centers in the area. He then presented these findings to provide a potential cost for the construction and operation of a new center. Without a pool, construction would cost approximately \$350 to \$400 per square foot. The project costs would be \$420 to \$520 per square foot. Adding on a recreation pool to the building, which includes locker rooms, would run about \$550 per square foot for a 15,000 square foot pool and approximately \$450 per square foot for a 3500 square foot locker room (adding in 30% for additional costs) To add a recreation pool to the center would cost an estimated \$12.8 million. Adding on a 6000 square foot therapy pool would cost \$500 per square foot. Along with the costs for the locker rooms, the estimated cost to add a therapy pool to the center would be \$4.775 million. He estimated yearly building utility costs would be \$4 to \$5 per square foot with yearly staffing costs running anywhere from \$23 to \$25 per square foot. This would make the total yearly operating expenses approximately \$50 to \$55 per square foot including staffing. Mr. Stempien then discussed revenue that the Community/Senior Center could generate from memberships, exercise class offerings, facility rentals, and vending or concessions. He listed potential funding sources for this center which would be discussed later in the meeting.

Ms. Neher then presented her visioning of the new center, including brainstorming sessions held with and between Executive Director Tucker and her staff. The top items to come out of the brainstorming was the need for diverse gathering space, a community pool, and multi-generational spaces. Priorities included green spaces to harness the nature around the center, fitness and health, and a tie between educational and multi-generational spaces and last, a water element. Ms. Neher laid out her exhibit of where the footprint for the new center would lie in the West Bloomfield campus. Encompassing the current Parks & Rec building, it would extend in a linear design to the east to provide the least disruption to the existing woodlands and wetlands and to also include them as a focal point in the architecture and design of the building. She also noted that parking spaces had to be taken into consideration. With a building the size proposed, the recommended amount of parking spaces would be 400 spaces. After construction, the site plan would be shy around 200 spaces. Discussion points included building the center without the pool, which would save around 9,000 square feet and make more parking available. Historically, in the area, pools have not been successful, with centers often closing them and using the space in different ways. The cost and the timing of the project were discussed, costing approximately \$43 million, not taking in consideration the rising costs of construction and a shrinking bidding pool. The timing was laid out as 8-10 months for design and one to one and a half years for construction.

ITEM 7 - Consideration of Senior Services Facility Options

Executive Director Tucker advised that the three-year lease for the Connect Senior Center space in the Orchard Mall is up for renewal on May 31st, 2022. They have been advised by the Orchard Mall management that they will not renew nor extend the current lease. Superintendent Hyer reported that the Connect Center occupies 7200 square feet it has hosted 252 classes since opening in January 2020 and currently has 338 members. Director Tucker explored several alternative options for the center including churches, commercial locations, recreation centers and parks in the area, other spaces available at Orchard Mall, and nearby office centers. Executive Tucker reported finding leases in the area running at \$17,000-\$20,000 per month. Director Tucker presented the three most viable options.

The first option would be a one-year agreement with the West Bloomfield School District to occupy an approximately 16,450 square foot section at Abbott Middle School. Abbott Middle School is being decommissioned as of June 17th, 2022. The school district would only charge utilities for rent. The area in the school would require minor reconfiguration including paint, carpet, and a reception desk. The area includes some office spaces, a large room used as the current chorus and orchestra room and gym. The WBPRC would look into a short-term lease agreement with Orchard Mall for space during the interim time needed between the end of the school year and approximately September to make the minor upgrades at

the middle school. The positives would be the amount of space available for all the activities offered on the program, available office space, and financial advantage to just paying for utilities in the area Connect would occupy and minimal work needed to reconfigure the space to the needs of Connect as well as a partnership with the school district. The negatives are the need for interim space needed between May 31, 2022, and the time the Abbott space is ready and only having a firm one-year agreement in place. A new school Superintendent is being elected and any future beyond the one-year agreement would depend on the new superintendent's Master Plan for the district, including the school.

The second option would be to move Connect to the Parks and Rec building and find other office space for the current admin in the building. Director Tucker did remind the Commission about the expense of leases in the area and the unknown length of time this would be until the completion of the proposed Recreation Activities Center.

The third option would be to lease other space from Orchard Mall. There are two spaces available: one that used to be the Sav-On Drugs with additional square footage, but this space would require extensive remodeling and reconfiguration to become usable space. The second is a smaller space than the current Connect but Mall management would offer for around \$1,500 per month. After questions and discussion, it was agreed that neither of these options would work well.

The Commission and the Staff talked about each of the options extensively. All the questions were answered, and the discussion focused on all aspects of the options. It was agreed that the focus of the move was to cause as little disruption to the Connect staff and its members as possible. It was also important to keep a positive view of the move for marketing and public relations.

After much conversation, a fourth option was developed. It was proposed that Connect would move to the current Parks & Recreation building and the current Parks & Recreation admin staff would move into the office space at Abbott Middle School. This would allow the WBPRC to move into a partnership with the West Bloomfield School District and the possibility to extend the one-year agreement when the new Superintendent of the school district was determined. Having the extra space at Abbott would allow for the Connect activities that the Parks & Rec building couldn't accommodate, such as pickleball, badminton and the stretch & tone classes. The office type space at the school would take little renovation to be used as office space for the admin and staff. This would be a favorable move for the staff and for the members as it would offer more space for the activities that require more space and put the WBPRC in better position for a longer agreement. Next steps were determined to be: Obtain the one-year agreement from the School District for the Abbott Middle School space to be used for Parks & Rec staff and admin as well as the larger space to be used for Connect activities. The existing Parks & Rec building would be reconfigured to host the other Connect activities at a limited capacity until the Abbott space could be configured for the Admin and Staff.

Motion by Commissioner Barash, seconded by Commissioner Aronoff to move Connect to the Parks & Rec building and to have WBPRC admin secure space at Abbott.

After further discussion, the motion was then amended by Commissioner Barash and seconded by Commissioner Aronoff for WBPRC to move forward to secure available space at Abbott Middle School to use it at their discretion.

**Ayes: 5
Nays: 1
Absent: 1
Motion Carried 5-1**

ITEM 8 - Funding options for the future West Bloomfield Township Community/Senior Center.

Grant funds- Funding dollars from the American Rescue Fund are being pursued, however there is no real understanding of this process as of today. Director Tucker will keep investigating and exploring this grant as details are made available.

Private Donations

Bond Money - Would contribute towards the construction costs.

Millage - Executive Director Tucker advised if a millage is going to be pursued this year, language needs to be approved this month. At this point, Director Tucker recommended going for an operating millage/construction in 2023 to allow for more time to gain support and after further details are determined regarding the future Recreation Center.

ITEM 9- PUBLIC FORUM - None present

ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Commission the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:30pm.

Reviewed by,
Vincent Kirkwood

(As a permanent record, an audio tape of this meeting in its entirety is on file and will remain at the Parks and Recreation offices where it may be heard.)