

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

April 23, 2015

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in a conference at 5:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 23rd day of April, 2015, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Allison, Castleberry, Heiple, Holman, Lang, Williams, and Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT:

Councilmembers Jungman and Miller

Item 1, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE FOLLOWING COMPONENT OF A CITIZENS' QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVE ENTITLED "NORMAN FORWARD":

- YMCA PARTNERSHIPS
 - INDOOR AQUATICS
 - BASKETBALL/VOLLEYBALL COURT FACILITY

Aquatics Facility

Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the Parks Master Plan (PMP) has a section on aquatics that includes indoor and outdoor aquatics. The recommendation from the PMP has scenarios to replace Westwood Pool and construct an Indoor Aquatic Facility. He said the PMP identified a need for indoor aquatics in Norman and considered two scenarios for an indoor pool, Scenario A - develop an indoor pool next to a new Indoor Recreation Center (proposed for Ruby Grant Park) and Scenario B – develop an Indoor Aquatic Facility as an expansion of existing the YMCA Aquatics or as part of a new satellite YMCA facility. He said Staff is focusing on Scenario B and introduced Mr. Kent Nicholson, Swim Coach for Norman High School and Sooner Swim Club.

Mr. Nicholson said Norman Forward is proposing a partnership between the YMCA, Norman Public Schools, Sooner Swim Club, Norman Regional Hospital, and the City of Norman that will maximize the potential benefit of an Aquatic Center for Norman. He said Norman Forward has developed a two pool plan that will serve every demographic in Norman. He said the plan will provide a significant health impact for the City because there are too many children sitting idle from 4:00 p.m. to bedtime. He said that is not good for the children's health and Norman will continue to grow so the City really needs to keep the children busy and the Norman Forward proposal which includes an Aquatic Center goes a long way in keeping children busy. He said the largest health impact will be to the young and senior citizens. An Aquatic Facility could teach every child how to swim and although the YMCA has been trying to do that for years, logistically, their facility does not allow them to do that. He said there is nothing better for the health and wellness of senior citizens than performing water exercises in a warm water pool. He said fitness swimmers will be able to take advantage of the facility as well. An Aquatic Facility will have a significant health impact on the community, a solid economic impact on the community, and a daily impact by bringing people in from surrounding communities. An Aquatic Facility would be capable of hosting high level regional and national swim meets. The facility would also be a centerpiece for Norman's commitment to the quality of life of its citizens.

Aquatics Facility, continued:

Mr. Nicholson said facility construction costs for a competitive pool (50 meters by 25 yards) and a teaching/aerobic/recreation pool (25 meters by 25 yards) are projected to be \$12 million with operational costs of \$750,000 annually. He said the teaching/aerobic/recreation pool would be approximately the same size as the existing YMCA pool, which it would replace. He said the \$750,000 operation cost is at the high end of a range of expenses that could be expected from a facility and is based on operating expenses of the current Cleveland County YMCA.

Mr. Nicholson highlighted a proposed partnership for annual contributions as follows:

- ✓ YMCA - \$400,000 (\$200,000 revenue from proposed facility and \$200,000 present deficit)
- ✓ Norman Public Schools - \$50,000 (based on cost of lane rental)
- ✓ Sooner Swim Club - \$50,000 (based on cost of lane rental)
- ✓ Norman Regional Hospital - \$50,000 (currently has relationship with YMCA for rehab services)
- ✓ Swim Meet Revenue - \$25,000 (based on cost of lane rental)
- ✓ City of Norman - \$175,000 (10-15 years funded from bond)

Mr. Nicholson said the City of Edmond is responsible for any expenses over revenue for the Edmond Aquatic Center. He said in Norman's situation, the YMCA would manage the \$750,000 annual operating costs and the City of Norman's portion would be a fixed contribution that will not float up and down. He said over time, Norman Forward believes the revenues will exceed expenses making the City of Norman's portion lower.

Mayor Rosenthal asked Mr. Nicholson to clarify the YMCA's present deficit of \$200,000 and Mr. Nicholson said current revenues do not cover operating costs and they currently run a deficit on their pool. Mayor Rosenthal asked the age of the YMCA pool and Mr. Nicholson said 30 years old.

Mr. Nicholson said a City the size of Norman really needs to provide this type of facility for its citizens and it needs to be done now. If Norman does not get a facility built in the near future in the front end of the Norman Forward proposed projects, the Aquatics Program that has provided so much to the children and families in Norman has a strong likelihood of going away in the next few years.

Councilmember Williams said the examples of the operating expenses provided by Norman Forward seem to overlap with the YMCA's current expenses. Mr. Vernon McKown, former YMCA Board Member, said Norman Forward built in the worst case scenario so that if they were able to back off some expenses later it would show some responsibility on their part.

Councilmember Allison asked the net gain of footage on pool water space since the existing YMCA pool would be removed and Mr. Nicholson said the net gain is a 50 meter by 25 yard indoor complex with seating for 750. Mr. McKown said the proposed redeveloped YMCA pool will be a warm water therapy pool so the whole pool can be constructed as a shallow pool, which would result in a smaller body of water to manage reducing operating costs. He said new mechanical equipment and new technology should also help bring the energy and operation costs down.

Councilmember Castleberry what asked the construction timeline would be and Mr. McKown said it would probably be an 18 to 24 month project done in phases so there will not be any time without water.

Aquatics Facility, continued:

Councilmember Holman asked how the public access piece is projected to work and Mr. Nicholson said the citizens will not have to be a member of the YMCA and there will be public access through the Sooner Swim Club and Norman Public Schools. Mayor Rosenthal said it is her understanding it took the YMCA, the City of Edmond, and Edmond Public Schools a year to negotiate an agreement for their aquatic facility. She has read the agreement and is not sure it would pass muster with Norman's citizens in terms of the details. She asked if there has been any discussion on best practices for a shared facility and who would control and ensure public access to the facility. Mr. Nicholson said Dr. Joe Siano, Norman Public School's Superintendent, asked that same question and he thought the Norman Swim Team and Sooner Swim Club should work out the scheduling details with the YMCA. Those details have been worked out, but the second pool's scheduling details have not been determined since the pool does not exist; however, everyone will have access through Norman Public Schools, Sooner Swim Club, YMCA Scholarship Program, or daily use fees.

Councilmember Lang said senior citizens like to have access to warm water exercise, but the competitive swim program Norman currently has requires a different environment so those two groups will probably not share the water at the same time. He said this is where the sticking points come in on public access. Mr. Nicholson said that is why two pools are being proposed. He said senior citizens do not want the water cold and they do not want the water deep so two pools are needed to have different depths and temperatures for the different activities that will take place.

Mayor Rosenthal was concerned about the daily use fee. She said if the City is building the facility what will the use fees be? She said people have a general expectation to pay a use fee, but the question is how much. Councilmember Castleberry asked what Westwood Pool charges and Mr. Foster said \$6. Mr. Nicholson said because the proposed pool is an indoor pool and not an outdoor pool like Westwood, it has to be climate controlled so operational costs will be higher.

Mayor Rosenthal said Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC) closed their pool due to annual maintenance and operation costs and asked how Norman would avoid the same fate? Mr. McKown said the YMCA has a million dollar reserve account for building and equipment maintenance costs so YMCA takes a portion of all revenues to place into the reserve account annually. He said as the new facility is being constructed, YMCA will raise those reserves proportionate to the additional maintenance and operation costs. Mr. Nicholas said the YMCA will be responsible for the upkeep of the facility and will be responsible for any expenses that exceed \$750,000 so they are taking that risk as well.

Ms. Joy Hampton, The Norman Transcript, said citizens currently pay \$10 at the YMCA and get to use all YMCA programs, not just the pool. She asked if fees will be different for citizens who just want to use the pool. She said \$10 for use of the pool only seems high. She said the scholarships the YMCA offers are nice for low income citizens, but does not help the working class unless they can donate time by working in the concession stands. Mayor Rosenthal said these are issues that need to be worked out.

Ms. Jayne Crumpley, 423 Elm Avenue, said the YMCA currently leases land from the University of Oklahoma (OU) at a fairly costly fee, so where is the money coming from to expand the area. She is also concerned about the cost of membership if the facility is expanded. Mr. Nicholson said the YMCA will continue the current lease with OU. Ms. Crumpley asked if parking will be reduced and Mr. Nicholson said parking will transition to the Basketball/Volleyball Facility which is part of the next agenda item discussion, but there will be a net gain of parking spaces.

Aquatics Facility, continued:

Mayor Rosenthal said there are infrastructure costs in and the around all of the Norman Forward projects that have not been addressed.

Mr. Roger Gallagher, 1522 East Boyd, asked who will insure the facility since it will be a City facility managed by the YMCA and Mr. Nicholson said that conversation has not taken place. Councilmember Allison said the City would basically be leasing the facility to the YMCA so, in his opinion, the YMCA should take that risk.

Indoor Recreation Facility

Mr. Foster said another section of the PMP deals with Indoor Recreation Facilities. He said Option One is to maintain the status quo by continuing to provide supplemental indoor recreation programs at the 12th Avenue Recreation Center, Irving Recreation, and Whittier Recreation Center. Over time and as possible, these facilities would be upgraded and modernized and the 12th Avenue Recreation Center will be expanded by 30% to 50%. Option Two is to develop a new state-of-the-art City owned and operated Indoor Recreation Center, possibly located in Ruby Grant Park, and Option Three is to assist the YMCA and other non-profit entities in developing additional indoor recreation facilities.

In Option One, the City would continue to offer most of its limited indoor recreation programs from the 12th Avenue Recreation Center. The facility would require a significant upgrade and would still be limited by its site and the aging condition of the existing building. The potential cost for improvements are projected to be \$1,500,000 to \$3,000,000. In Option Two, Norman would develop a new center that could include two gyms; cardio fitness training room; weight training room; an indoor running track; classrooms and meeting rooms; an arts and crafts room; computer lab; teen room/game room; and large meeting facilities with a kitchen. A follow-up phase would include renovation/expansion of the 12th Avenue Recreation Center to supplement the programs offered by the new facility. Potential costs are \$13,500,000 to \$16,500,000 for construction of a new 60,000 square foot facility at \$225 to \$275 per square foot, which does not include land acquisition. Mr. Foster said a site possibility is Ruby Grant Park. In Option Three, Norman's indoor recreation needs would be provided by entities other than the City of Norman. The City could enter into a partnership with the YMCA to construct a new facility and a YMCA satellite facility in southeast Norman. The facility would be operated as a YMCA with typical fees and membership requirements. The City could look to other entities to also provide programming and facilities in other parts of Norman. Costs for this option could range from \$0 (if existing City owned lands are provided as the City's contribution) to a suggested upper range of \$5,000,000 for the City's share of the cost. The remaining cost of construction and operation of the facility would be funded by the operator of the facility.

Mr. Steve McDaniel of Norman Optimist Club said Norman Forward's proposal is for an \$8.5 million Indoor Recreational Facility. He said proposed plans include eight full size courts which could convert to 16 youth size courts, designated spectator areas with easy access and flow of movement, concession and lobby areas, and meeting and storage space. He presented photos of the Farha Center in Wichita, Kansas, and Fieldhouse USA Dallas, Texas, which are facilities similar to what Norman Forward is proposing.

Mr. McDaniel said an indoor facility would give the City the ability to host regional basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, wrestling, and other sport tournaments. The facility would also allow the Optimist Club, Norman Parks and Recreation, and the YMCA to create cohesive relationships on sports programming. General public access would be available with scheduling through the managing entity and these three entities have that experience. He said an indoor facility could also accommodate pickle-ball; chess tournaments; badminton; cheerleading, and martial arts. He said there are activities throughout the week that take place so the facility would not just be used on weekends for tournaments.

Indoor Recreation Facility, continued:

Mr. McDaniel said, nationally, women's volleyball is growing at a faster rate than women's basketball. In Oklahoma there 183 club teams and that does not include high school teams where three years ago there were only 150. He said there are about 1,500 volleyball participants and 38 competitive teams in Oklahoma and Norman has a Premier Volleyball Club that has doubled in members over the last two years.

He said the proposed site is on property located near the YMCA, which has an existing City owned (OU (sic)) building currently being used and managed by the Optimist Club. He said Norman Forward has had discussions with the YMCA about managing the facility. Mayor Rosenthal asked if the existing facility would be demolished to make room for the new facility and, if so, does that mean there will be no facility during reconstruction and Mr. Nicholson said Norman Forward has discussed construction of the facility adjacent to the existing building so there would be no loss of play time and when the new facility is constructed the existing facility would be demolished for parking spaces.

Mayor Rosenthal asked what square footage would be needed for a facility with eight full courts and Mr. McDaniel said 65,000 square feet.

Mayor Rosenthal said there is nothing in the presentation tonight regarding partnership commitments for an indoor facility and asked if discussions have taken place with the YMCA or other entities regarding managing the facility and Mr. Nicholson said several entities would like to have the opportunity to bid on the management and the YMCA is very interested in bidding. He said it would be a City facility so the City would probably make that decision.

Mayor Rosenthal asked what the operating costs would be and Mr. McDaniel said the operating cost should be covered by memberships, leasing to the Optimist Club and other entities, and tournament revenues. Councilmember Castleberry said more information is needed regarding operating costs and Mayor Rosenthal asked Staff to put together some figures on operating costs.

Councilmember Castleberry said there has been discussions with Norman Public Schools regarding Junior High students utilizing the facility and 16 youth courts would allow teams to practice simultaneously freeing up Norman's Recreation Centers for other programs.

Councilmember Holman was concerned about the facility being located north of Robinson Street. He said 12th Avenue Recreation, Ruby Grant Park, and the existing City facility being used by the Optimist Club are all located north of Robinson Street. He said most of the City's population is south of Robinson Street and the southeast part of the City is the fastest growing area. Councilmember Castleberry believed Norman Forward is suggesting Robinson Street because that is where the existing facility is located and the City (OU (sic)) owns the land.

Councilmember Lang said, from an economic standpoint, if the facility succeeds and draws in traffic, Ruby Grant Park might be a more convenient location since it is close to the interstate and City of Moore. He said an impact study should be done to see where people are going, where they are coming from, and where they travel from tournaments, league games, etc. Councilmember Holman did not want people coming to Norman just to end up going to Moore to eat and shop.

Mayor Rosenthal said there are other facilities to compete with and she would like to know the number of tournaments those facilities host. Councilmember Lang said if participants head somewhere besides Norman, the benefit to Norman will be relatively minor. Mr. McDaniel said there is not a "Farha" facility available anywhere in the metro area. Councilmember Castleberry said tournaments are held every weekend and Norman could be very competitive from that standpoint.

Indoor Recreation Facility, continued:

Mr. McKown said he serves on the State Wrestling Board, which handles the tournament scheduling and the Board had to cancel tournaments for the season because a facility was not available to host the tournaments. He said it is very hard to find facilities in the western part of Oklahoma.

Ms. Hampton did not believe the City owned the land where the existing facility is located and Councilmember Castleberry said the City (Optimist Club (sic)) has a \$1 lease with the OU for ninety years. Ms. Hampton said OU is continually expanding so will the City be able to continue to obtain long term leases with OU? Mr. Nicholson said OU is open to extending the lease on a long term basis and believes City Staff has confirmed this as well.

Councilmember Williams asked what an economic impact study would cost, who would do it, and who would pay for it. Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said the study would cost at least \$5,000 to \$10,000 and Council would most likely want the study performed by an outside consulting firm that does that type of study throughout the country.

Public Comments

Would the facility have locker rooms? Will any of the projects have Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rated shelters the community could use? Mr. Nicholson said there is limited locker room space and he did not know about shelters. Mayor Rosenthal said the City of Norman has embraced a policy of "Shelter In Place."

The Norman Forward proposals are concentrating a whole lot of stuff in one area that has terrible roads, terrible access, is on the north side of Norman, and a long way from where people are living. Why hasn't the YMCA built these facilities themselves if they see such a strong need for them? Why not build facilities near neighborhoods where citizens can walk to the facility versus driving? Mr. Nicholson said the proposals were developed by the Norman Forward group and the YMCA did not seek out these facilities. He said Norman Forward wants to be good stewards of the community, but they do not have the means to do these projects. He said it takes a community joining together to do these types of projects.

What will the impact to the neighborhood recreation centers be if facilities like this are built? Will they continue to operate and improve? Mr. Foster said, in the short term, the City anticipates continuing the recreation center programs. The PMP's long term approach is to renovate and enlarge the 12th Avenue Recreation Center, construct a new facility at Ruby Grant Park, and vacate the Irving and Whittier Recreation Centers turning them over to Norman Public Schools to allow them to keep the facilities open.

Additional Council Comments

Mayor Rosenthal said the City will need to review a indoor facilities budgetary impact on Parks and Recreation and Mr. Foster said the City is not contemplating operating the indoor facility.

Councilmember Holman would like to know the cost to improve Lexington Street from Flood Street to the new facilities. He said the closest bus stop is on Robinson Street so bus service nearer to the facilities is something that should be considered as well.

Indoor Aquatics and Basketball/Volleyball Court Facility, continued:

Items submitted for the record

1. Memorandum dated April 17, 2015, from Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, to Steve Lewis, City Manager
2. Parks Master Plan, Chapter 6 – Aquatic Facilities Recommendations, #2 – Plan for and Develop an Indoor Aquatic Facility
3. A Legacy for the Next Generation – The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Norman – Action Plan 2010-2020
4. Norman Forward Aquatic Center, prepared by Norman Forward Committee dated April 17, 2015
5. Photos of the new Edmond Aquatic Facility
6. Article entitled, “End of an Era: OCCC Aquatic Center Set to Close – the facility will suspend operation after Labor Day weekend dated April 15, 2015
7. A Legacy for the Next Generation – the Norman Parks and Recreation Master Plan
8. PowerPoint presentation entitled, “Norman Recreation Center & Indoor Sports Facility,” prepared by Norman Forward

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The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor