

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 6, 2006

The Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Upper St. Clair, duly advertised and posted in accordance with law, was called to order at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, September 6, 2006, in the Upper St. Clair High School Theatre, 1825 McLaughlin Run Road, Upper St. Clair, PA 15241.

PRESENT: Commissioner Mertz President
 Commissioner Bates Vice President
 Commissioner Brown
 Commissioner McElhinny
 Commissioner Orcho wski
 Commissioner Shimer

EXCUSED: Commissioner Marsh

PUBLIC: Approximately 250 people

Commissioner Mertz, on behalf of the entire Board, welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the presentation. He provided the public with a summary of the Boyce Mayview Park Plan which is a result of a two and a half year intense study and includes a Community Recreation Center and an outdoor aquatic center. He advised that after the presentation this evening the general public will have an opportunity to ask questions and express their thoughts. Commissioner Mertz introduced fellow Commissioners.

PRESENTATION OF DETAILED PRE-SCHEMATIC PLANS FOR A NEW COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER TO BE LOCATED IN BOYCE MAYVIEW PARK

- **History and Background of the Project** – Commissioner Orchowski; PowerPoint Presentation

Commissioner Orchowski provided a brief history of the Boyce Mayview Park property, Boyce Mayview Park Master Plan, Regional Environmental Education Center (REEC), Farm Kitchen renovation, trails system and athletic fields.

- **Site Selection** – Commissioner Orchowski

Commissioner Orchowski explained why the Boyce Mayview Park location provides an ideal area for many of the recreational facilities intended for the Community Recreation Center. He compared the Boyce Mayview Park location to the Township municipal area for the Community Recreation Center. He identified earlier problems cited with the McLaughlin Run Road location which were flooding, underground mining and traffic.

Pre-schematic Architecture Design Presentation – Larsen/WTW and EPM; PowerPoint Presentation

Commissioner Orchowski introduced the architects for the Community Recreation Center project: Jim Larsen from Larsen Architects, Mark Edelman from EPM and Doug Shuck from WTW Architects. Doug Shuck provided a visual map of the site plan. He described an atrium type building for the main building facility and indicated where the aquatic facilities are intended to be located. Doug Shuck introduced Jim Larsen who continued to elaborate details of the outdoor aquatic park, core parking lots and also identified the additional athletic fields. He described the various elements of the facilities planned to be available on the first floor level.

Mr. Larsen directed the presentation to Doug Shuck. Mr. Shuck discussed the outside view with respect to how the Community Recreation Center would appear upon approaching the facility and the placement sensitivity of the building, fields and pools. He discussed materials and safety features in accordance with the structure of the building and how the observation of the various activities will be viewed from inside the facility.

- **Ballard*King and Associates Review** – Commissioner Mertz

Commissioner Mertz acknowledged that the Commissioners have visited other types of facilities in Ohio and in Pennsylvania. He introduced Ken Ballard, President of Ballard*King and Associates. Mr. Ballard reviewed the Preliminary Report by Ballard*King and Associates. Commissioner Mertz discussed the various avenues the Commissioners have taken to compile information from the surveys. Commissioner Mertz indicated that an Ad Hoc Advisory Group was established and introduced Kathy Kasunich and Lynn Rubin, Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group.

- **Ad Hoc Advisory Group Review** – Ad Hoc Advisory Group Co-Chairs Kathy Kasunich and Lynn Rubin

Kathy Kasunich described the Ad Hoc Advisory Group and their efforts. She discussed how research and feedback from the community with respect to a Community Recreation Center impacted their report. She added that the committee conducted site visits in Pennsylvania and Ohio to view other recreation centers and compiled notes and spoke to members and officials in the various communities. The committee then prepared a report for the Commissioners outlining their recommendations. She then introduced Lynn Rubin.

Lynn Rubin spoke of the carefully planned process of preparing the report and indicated the report is available in the Township Library. She explained how a recreation facility will fully benefit the community of all ages and interests. She added that the Core Team and the Ad Hoc Advisory Group are looking forward to sharing ideas and to involve the community to bring the Community Recreation Center to life.

Commissioner Mertz introduced Commissioner Brown who explained how the Core Team was formed.

- **Core Team Review** – (Core Team Members Commissioner Brown, Commissioner McElhinny, Tom Burke, Terry Kish; PowerPoint Presentation)

Commissioner Brown spoke of the Core Team formation consisting of: Matthew Serakowski, Assistant Township Manager/Director of Planning and Community Development; Paul Besterman, Director of Recreation and Leisure Services; Commissioner McElhinny; Commissioner Brown; Tom Burke; Terry Kish; and architects, Doug Shuck; Warren Bulesco; and Mark Edelman. Commissioner Brown relayed how the Core Team was chosen and how each individual has a distinct role in the formation of the team. He added comments with respect to memberships at the Community Recreation Center. Commissioner Brown introduced Commissioner McElhinny.

Commissioner McElhinny discussed how membership to the facility should be established so that everyone in the community would be able to belong. She explained that the Community Recreation Center should be a service facility and emphasized that affordability is the key to bringing the Community Recreation Center to light.

Commissioner Mertz introduced Terry Kish.

Terry Kish emphasized that the main focus of the Core Team's input allows the Community Recreation Center to involve all community residents from toddlers to senior citizens. Ms. Kish reflected on the impact of a Community Recreation Center and how it will fit into the big picture. She used the example of imagining not having a community library and how a Community Recreation Center is the way of the future, focusing on the impact a library has on the community.

Commissioner Mertz introduced Tom Burke.

Tom Burke demonstrated a slide presentation that illustrated "The Circle of Age Groups" which focused on each age group from tots to seniors and the availability of various activities for each age group.

Commissioner Mertz thanked the Core Team and directed the continuation of the presentation to Commissioner Bates.

- **Partnerships** – (Commissioner Bates)

Commissioner Bates defined how the partnerships of neighbors, local businesses and organizations are included within the community and how a Community Recreation Center would impact them. He added that the Board of Commissioners decided to take the lead for the direction of the Community Recreation Center. He explained that the YMCA was identified as a possible partner in the development of the Community Recreation Center, however, the Board of Commissioners thought it would be in the best interest of the Township for the Community Recreation Center to remain in the control of the Township.

Commissioner Mertz continued the discussion with regard to costs for the facility.

- **Costs** – (WTW/Larsen and EPM Architects; PowerPoint Presentation)

Mark Edelman from EPM provided a brief background on their role as the architects for the project and their specialization with designing and building community centers. He stated that realistic budgets are an important part of the design process.

Commissioner Mertz suggested how the Township plans to pay for the Community Recreation Center and introduced Commissioner Shimer.

- **Tax Implications** – (Commissioner Shimer; Mike Bova and John McShane, Ferris Baker Watts; PowerPoint Presentation)

Commissioner Shimer introduced John McShane, Vice President, and Mike Bova, Principal, of Ferris Baker Watts, the underwriters of the project. John McShane presented a slide presentation that illustrated a Background and Overview on capital costs of the project being \$20.4 million to \$22.5 million with the aquatic center implemented. He stated that the figures for annual operating costs are estimated at \$2.48 million and net operational reserve is estimated at \$184,000.00 for repairs, etc.

Commissioner Shimer continued the discussion regarding the Ballard*King and Associates study with respect to membership fees, user fees and other sources of income. He provided an illustration of an Operational Summary determining the average Upper St. Clair taxpayer's contribution to the Community Recreation Center.

Mr. McShane spoke about the implementation of bonds. A Funding Analysis was displayed illustrating three approaches that are being considered. The first of these is funding based on real estate tax; secondly, funding based on earned income tax; and thirdly, funding based on a blend of earned income and real estate taxes.

Commissioner Shimer addressed considerations that there is no legal requirement for voter approval to issue bonds on this project. He explained that electoral bond issues require voter approval and this method is used when a municipality has exhausted their borrowing capacity. Commissioner Shimer said the Township can do this project and maintain \$22 million of funding capability for other projects. He continued that a referendum for funding purposes would involve voter education and this could delay and forfeit the figures already in place as the voter education process for referendum could take up to a year. Commissioner Shimer stated that authorizing the project without a referendum recognizes the thoroughness of the decision-making process.

- **Value to Community** – (Commissioner Mertz)

Commissioner Mertz noted that the Township has acquired the assistance of Ketchum, Inc., a local firm specializing in organizations that utilize fundraising to facilitate their financial requirements for projects of this scale.

Commissioner Mertz discussed the impact of the Community Recreation Center and how it may make the Township grow. He encouraged the citizens attending to speak and express

their concerns. Commissioner Mertz indicated that the Board will not be answering questions this evening, however, will provide answers to the public via the Township website or Library.

At this time, Commissioner Mertz opened the floor for comments from the public.

Mr. Brad Sileo, 1611 Terrie Drive, shared his favorable experiences with similar facilities in Colorado and indicated his belief that a new Recreation Center would be great for the community. A facility is needed to encourage the development and impact for children to live healthy, productive lives.

Mr. Ed Luksik, 2411 Berkshire Drive, suggested that computer technology education classes for senior citizens be incorporated into the planned activities for the Center. He asked for clarification on how the annual operations budget of \$2.48 million would be financed. Commissioner Mertz replied that \$810,000 would be provided through membership fees and \$1.4 million would be provided from program fees.

Ms. Beatrice Browand, 1624 Pinetree Drive, indicated her support for the Center as it would create a new main street in the community and add a valuable asset. She stressed the need for the Center as a gathering place and that it would be a special investment of tax dollars.

Mr. Tom Fowler, 2522 Hartwood Drive, stated his support for the project and suggested that the financing be provided through earned income tax revenue rather than property tax revenue due to cost concerns for senior citizens and the instability of the property assessments in the County.

Mr. Abraham Nader, 2365 Engelwood Drive, thanked the Board for their honesty and due diligence on the issue and confirmed his support of the Recreation Center.

Ms. Natalie Russo, 328 Hollydale Circle, expressed her complete support for the project. She asked how the fees would be structured for non-residents and stated her concern of overcrowding by non-residents. Further, she supported a sliding scale fee for usage based on income.

Mr. Tom Boyd, 2670 Fairgreen Drive, indicated his support of the project and requested that the project begin as soon as possible.

Dr. Harvey Rubin, 1892 Tilton Drive, stated his concern as a pediatrician, that children and teens in the community need a place to play that does not require them to be on a team. With obesity as a problem affecting many children, Dr. Rubin stated his complete support for the project as a means to improve community health.

Mr. Frank Procaccini, 1308 Woodlawn Court, stated that the presentation had changed his opinion of the project from skepticism to support. He believed the Board should move forward through funding from tax revenue, but stated that the Township should be careful of separating public from private sector functions. He stated that all residents should be charged \$115 in order to make the facility accessible to everyone.

Mr. Santino Tomasetti, 312 Painters Run Road, affirmed his support for the project and his hopes that it can be completed.

Ms. Marjorie Caplan, 1688 Hathaway Lane, expressed her belief that a Recreation Center was the missing item needed in the Township and that it would be great for senior citizens. She stated the project should be completed as quickly as possible.

Ms. Jan Fleckenstein, 201 Gerrie Drive, asked if the building would be a certified green building design. She affirmed her support of the project.

Mr. Carl Kylander, 554 Trotwood Ridge Road, stated the need for greater fees for non-residents than residents.

Mr. Dane Bakayza, 2263 Clairmont Drive, stated his support for the project and how it would be a great place to gather with friends for a nominal fee. He stated that the decision should not be decided by a referendum.

Ms. Annette Tomasetti, 312 Painters Run Road, affirmed her support for the project and thanked the Board for the presentation.

Ms. Carolyn Seymour, 128 Devonwood Drive, asked if the Board would consider amending the plan to include a competitive sized pool for additional revenue. She stated her support for the plan.

Ms. Karen Williams, 1547 Glenwood Road and a member of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, discussed her experiences with similar facilities in Cleveland and their ability to bring the community together. She urged the Board to move forward with the project right away.

Ms. Jenn Schuler, 2286 Clairmont Drive, provided statistics regarding the declining population in Allegheny County and discussed the need to think outside the box in order to entice new residents to move to the Township. She supported the plan and urged the Board to not have a referendum.

Mr. Fred Landgraf, 1321 Manor Drive, expressed concern over the proposed cost and asked the Board to better inform the community regarding the issue.

Mr. Mark Hamilton, 1910 Murdstone Road, stated that he was impressed with the presentation. Mr. Hamilton stated that a mandate would imply that no referendum was needed. He asked if only 19%-38% of the community were purchasing membership, could that be considered a mandate? He respectfully suggests mandating a referendum.

Mr. Mike Groarty, 2360 Harrow Road, discussed his support for the project as a means to increase property value. He stated the need to move quickly, without a referendum. He suggested an enlargement of the pool area.

Ms. Heidi Cohen, 2606 Lindenwood Drive, asked what extra costs would be involved for residents to pay. She stated that if residents are taxed, they should have free access to the facilities. She supports the addition of a skateboard park.

Mr. Sammy Furlong, 2606 Lindenwood Drive, asked the Board if they would consider adding a skateboard park to the design and why he felt this would be good for the teenagers in the Township.

Ms. Tracey Buckman, 1535 Redfern Drive, stated her support for a green building design and its long term benefits to the community. She is in favor of the project.

Mr. Bill Barnard, 560 Miranda Road and member of the Recreation Board, stated his enthusiastic support of the project.

Ms. Eunice Bradley, 2343 Golfview Drive, expressed disappointment in lack of efforts for a referendum. She asked if the tax increase for the project would ever be rescinded. She stated her support for the project and discussed the need for lower fees for senior citizens. She asked if there are any grants available to assist in funding.

Mr. Bob Dudas, 177 Warwick Drive, stated that he supports the project and asked if the Board would consider having a fee structure that allowed only partial access to the facilities.

Mr. Jim Miele, 1745 Waterford Court, asked what would happen if projections fall short and costs cannot be covered. He stated his support for a six lane swimming pool and felt that more information should be provided.

Mr. Russ Del Re, 232 Franklin Drive, expressed his support for the project and the public's involvement in all aspects of the planning.

Mr. Bill Babcock, 3410 Brookdale Drive, stated his support for the project despite a potential tax increase.

Commissioner Mertz thanked everyone for attending the meeting and all the volunteers for their efforts. He stated that all reports are available in the Library and that all questions brought forward from the meeting this evening will be addressed. He also stressed the fact that the Community Recreation Center is not in a final phase and announced that another special meeting is scheduled to be held on September 20, 2006 with respect to dealing with referendum issues. He encouraged the public to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:55 PM.

Lisa B. Cummings
Administrative Secretary
September 27, 2006

Note: This entire presentation was recorded and run for several weeks on Cable 7.