

Community Center Task Force Recommendation

The Community Center Task Force, comprised of residents appointed by the City Council, was given the duty of reviewing the 2007 Park Master Plan and a preliminary site assessment completed by Weis Design Group to compile a recommendation to the City Council for the 1050 Smith Avenue site. The group was also asked to study the option of moving City Hall operations to the site. The Task Force felt strongly that the site should be dedicated strictly to recreational and community use and should not include City Hall. The Task Force developed a list of eight priority uses for the proposed community center based on those studies and hosted an open house at the site on June 28, 2012 to allow residents to tour the site and provide feedback on the priority items and to contribute additional site uses for consideration. The Task Force has developed the following recommendations for inclusion in the proposed community center.

Fitness Center. A fitness center with exercise equipment such as stationary bicycles, treadmills, elliptical machines, and resistance training machines.

Meeting Space/Classrooms/Small Rental Space. Small rooms for use by community groups to hold meetings and events; for individuals or organizations to provide classes and instruction on topics such as art, photography, yoga, and crafting; and for rental to individuals for small events such as bridal or baby showers.

Gym/Basketball Court/Indoor Walking. Retain the gymnasium for athletic use. The space could also be used as a rental space for events. During certain hours of the day, the gym could be reserved for indoor walking.

Senior Center. Dedicate a space for Senior Citizens to gather and socialize. Special events such as Bingo, Yahtzee, and other organized activities could be held during the day. Some type of food service would be encouraged.

Kitchen/Food Service Area. Retain the kitchen for use by groups renting the facility and for special events. Provide an area where users can purchase healthy snacks and drinks.

Theater/Auditorium/Banquet Center/Ballroom/Large Rental Space. The church building would be ideal for use as an auditorium or large rental space. The space could be used for performing arts, community movie showings, and as a larger space for events such as weddings or parties.

Study Lounge/Computer Room. Technology room with computers and wired internet access for use by residents. There are currently services available at the Ferguson Municipal Public Library; however, the library has limited space. The committee also feels that wireless internet access throughout the facility would be an important consideration.

Child Care Room. Dedicated space for short-term child care. Parents would be able to drop children off while using the fitness room or taking a class at the facility. Secure access and proximity to restrooms are concerns for this room.

Youth Center. A space for youth to gather and socialize. Special events and programs geared toward youth could be organized for after school and evening hours and during the summer.

Outdoor Walking Trail. A trail similar to the trails found in many of the City's parks for outdoor recreation.

Community Gardens. A dedicated space on the property where residents would be allowed to rent a space for planting. Similar to the Old Ferguson West Community Garden.

Locker Rooms. Small locker rooms for users to store personal items while they use the facility. Some small shower facilities could be included as well.

Art/Photo/Project Gallery. Displays throughout the building of art, photography, crafts, etc. completed by residents in the community.

The Task Force believes that all of these uses can be accommodated within the existing space and layout of the facility. Removable partitions and seating could be used in the building to make it as flexible as possible and provide the greatest value for the residents. Partnerships with other entities could be utilized to supplement the facility. Possible partnerships could include the Ferguson Municipal Public Library, the Northern Arts Council, and the Ferguson-Florissant School District.

The Task Force also recognizes that the City has adopted Ordinance 2009-3382 which establishes energy conservation requirements for all City operations. The renovations made to the proposed community center should maximize the potential for energy conservation as provided for by this Ordinance which will ensure a durable investment to the taxpayers.

For future expansion the Task Force recommends a natatorium for indoor swimming and water fitness classes. There is also an opportunity to use some of the land in close proximity to the property to construct senior housing villas. The villas would help retain the senior population by providing a housing alternative for active seniors.

Submitted July 17, 2012

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