



CITY COUNCIL • 1140 Terex Road • Hudson, Ohio 44236 • (330) 342-1795

Date: January 26, 2021

To: City Council Members

CC: Craig Shubert, Mayor
Jane Howington, City Manager

From: Nicole Kowalski, At-Large Council Member

Subject: Recreation Center Process

Background

This proposal was born out of an incredible amount of citizen feedback that an amenity Hudson lacks is a recreation (rec) center. The residents in Hudson have been discussing this topic for over a decade, it is highly desirable amenity to the community.

I recently came across a report on the topic generated by an Ad Hoc Recreation Committee which was submitted to Township Trustees in 1993. I feel that it is past due for us to have this conversation, and that we should gauge the interest of the community to evaluate if this is something we should seriously pursue.

The proposal to utilize an existing facility in Hudson versus buying new was always intended to be exploratory. Council is not limited to this option.

Objectives

Determine the viability of a rec center in Hudson, OH, as well as possible avenues for Council and staff to explore to satisfy this resident need. Educate the public on the options available and help them understand the tax implications associated with each option.

Considerations

The term “rec center” means different things to different people. Some people imagine very different things when they talk about this topic. Part of this process is to determine what a rec center would look like for Hudson.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the exercise facility industry has dramatically changed.

Additionally, much of the conversation surrounding this topic seems to center around the lack of public swim facilities in Hudson. Even at the height of the pandemic, spending time at an outdoor pool was widely considered to be a reasonably safe activity. As a result, the requests for a local swim facility for members of the community who do not have access to a neighborhood pool or a club membership has increased when the topic of a rec center is discussed.

Suggested Process

1. Ask staff to get a professional valuation and facilities analysis of LifeCenter to see if this is something we want to pursue.
2. Following that, have staff prepare a comparative cost analysis of the three options I suggested (see page 3), as well as any other options Council may want to explore. *Note: I suggest we also give an approximate cost of a brand new, state-of-the-art facility utilizing data from neighboring communities to approximate.*
3. Comparative cost analysis should include:
 - Estimated total cost
 - Recommendation for funding
 - The property tax impact for each, if applicable
 - Long-term projections/viability of a rec center (utilizing existing data of the financial implications for cities that have them)

If Council wishes to do a survey....

4. While staff works to bring Council cost analyses to consider, simultaneously, we should do a survey (separate from the Phase 2 survey) that encompasses, but is not limited to, the following topics:
 - Desired Amenities
 - Senior Center/Programs
 - Indoor and outdoor pool
 - Splash pad
 - Lazy river
 - Tennis, basketball, racquetball, pickle ball courts (some already proposed by park board as projects)
 - Specialty studios (already have many in Hudson)
 - Meeting rooms
 - Ice rink
 - Typical workout equipment
 - Childcare
 - Dining/bar
 - Sauna
 - Family locker room
 - Desired Location
 - Percentage of residents who would join
 - Membership cost
 - Willingness to pay increased property taxes to fund
5. Once we have results from a survey, we can compare the results with the proposed costs of all options staff brings forward to begin eliminating options, or, considering if this project is even viable for Hudson.

Recap from 1/19/21 City Council Meeting:

LifeCenter Plus

Option 1:

City enters into an agreement with LifeCenter which effectively makes it our Rec center, a property tax levy pays for subsidized (reduced) membership and some capital improvements. Jerry Lynch, current owner, continues to own and operate the facility.
Funded via property tax levy

Option 2:

City purchases the facility, Jerry Lynch continues to operate it.
*would need to discuss capital improvements, if any
Estimated cost of facility (purchase only): \$5 mil

Option 3:

City purchases the facility, operates the business, and reduces cost of membership.
*would need to discuss capital improvements, if any
Estimated cost of facility at \$5 mil + operation costs and membership subsidy

Note: The estimated purchase price of \$5 million is based on the 2018 appraised value of \$4,750,000, and adjusted for 2020. This is not an exact valuation by any means. This is a preliminary estimation for conversation purposes only. Now that there has been significant community interest, staff can engage a professional to do a valuation of the BUSINESS in totality. This will give Council and residents a better idea of the cost of moving forward with options 2 or 3, should that be Council's desire.