



Gaithersburg

A CHARACTER COUNTS!

CITY OF GAITHERSBURG

MINUTES OF A CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

January 12, 2009

A work session of the Mayor and City Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m., Mayor Katz presiding. Council Members present: Ashman, Drzyzgula, Marraffa, Sesma, and Spiegel. Staff present: City Manager Jones, Assistant City Manager Felton, Assistant City Manager Tomasello, City Attorney Board, Parks, Recreation and Culture Director, Potter, Program Director, McGuire, Community Facility Director, Whipple, and Recreation Program Coordinator III, Mornini.

A Resolution was approved on August 4, 2008, by the Mayor and City Council, establishing the Ad Hoc Committee to Determine the Requirements for the Senior Center and Explore the Recreation Trends for Active Older Adults. The Committee met in the months of September through December, approximately 30 hours in an 18 week span, and is prepared to give their findings and recommendations.

Director Potter, Mrs. Jean Mitchell and Mr. Clyde Horton, members representing the Ad Hoc Senior Center Committee, presented the final report and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council. A power point had been prepared and shared. Director Potter also announced that the City of Gaithersburg will be awarded the 2008 Physical Activity Excellence Award, Senior Division, for the State of Maryland for the City's support of the numerous fitness classes offered at the Senior Center in addition to allowing the budget for national fitness certification and continuing education credits for staff.

Presentation included:

- Assessment of the current City Senior Center, its programs, and determination of its ability to meet needs and challenges;
- Sharing of research pertaining to local, regional and national 'older adults' population growth and trends;
- Description of various senior and community centers visited to learn best practices;
- Sharing of the Committee's research conducted, such as polling current senior members for their preferences and decision making;
- Identification and exploration of funding opportunities and partnerships with government and private agencies;
- Discussion of three proposed location options with pros and cons of each;
- Summarization of the priorities/recommendations for a new Adult Activity Center.

Upon conclusion of the presentation, Staff is seeking guidance on the following specific issues:

- Commitment in the form of a motion and agreement to proceed with a feasibility study on proposed sites based on the Committee's recommendations;
- That Mayor and Council be open to any new location which may arise;
- Staff may continually pursue avenues of funding.
- Mayor and Council strategically move project forward as quickly as possible.

I. TOPIC(S) OF DISCUSSION

Discussion with the Council included:

- Recognition of State and local politicians for their commitment to the Committee
- Continue to integrate intergenerational programming and use of various facilities with transportation
- Visit to Bowie Senior Center was conducted by Mayor and prior Council members
- Establish a County partnership balance based on percentage of residents and non residents, evaluating trends, projecting out years of 2030 and 2050
- Timing of funding for design and construction, and that it is not tied in to one specific location
- Facility is used for socialization and hobbies of mature adults
- Implementation of various recommendations such as purchase of chairs, installation of telephones, programming additional health care practices and enhanced transportation practices should be encouraged now
- Survey individuals of intergenerational vs. stand alone facility
- Traffic Study will be part of feasibility studies, particularly along Route 355 for access to Activity Center at Bohrer Park and Casey East at Watkins Mill
- Staffing for each of the three sites must be considered as part of feasibility study
- Need for Case Management and Nurse
- Staff was praised for growth in membership and daily participation in addition to receipt of the 2008 Award for Physical Activity Excellence for the State of Maryland
- Feasibility study will determine size of rooms and facility taking into account population trends and growth

Public Comments

- Concern for adult recreational center in close proximity to a high school; would feel safer near a proposed Police Station
- Seniors who attend off site classes, such as at the Activity Center, drive and do not return to the Senior Center's dining room for socialization afterward
- Average age of Senior is 75 years, whom may not see or utilize the new Center

The Council directed staff to:

- Proceed with an RFP for a feasibility study on proposed sites based on the Committee's recommendations
- Be open to any alternative site that may become available
- Continue to seek funding, asking the contracted consultant for resources
- Draft letter to Montgomery County Executive and Council, as well as Delegates and Senators in Districts 15 and 39, sharing this Report and Recommendations

II. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before this session of the City Council, the meeting was duly adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele R. Potter
Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture