

JOINT CITY COUNCIL/NORMAN FORWARD SENIOR CENTER AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP
CONFERENCE

November 12, 2019

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, and the NORMAN FORWARD Senior Ad Hoc Group met in a joint meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference room on the 12th day of November, 2019, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Bierman, Carter,
Hall, Holman, Petrone, Scanlon, Scott,
Wilson, and Mayor Clark

ABSENT:

None

Item 1, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE SENIOR CENTER PROJECT.

Dr. Gail Hobson, Chair of the NORMAN FORWARD Senior Center Ad Hoc Group, introduced fellow members Ms. Julie Knudsen and Ms. Nadine Jewell.

Mr. Jud Foster, Director of Parks and Recreation, said the first regular meeting of the NORMAN FORWARD Senior Ad Hoc Group (NF Senior Group) was held on September 4, 2019, regarding the Senior Center timeline and budget (\$7.6 million). On September 17, 2019, the NF Senior Group reviewed existing facilities and conducted priority exercises. On September 18, 2019, the first public meeting was held where the design team, FSB Architects, highlighted public outreach plans, survey, example programs, and conducted a priority exercise. On October 9, 2019, the NF Senior Group discussed the proposed budget and voted to meet with City Council to convey budget concerns. On October 30, 2019, a second public meeting was held to gather further input regarding programming and facility priorities as well as initial survey results and a basic conceptual floor plan with phasing options.

Mr. John Semtner, FSB Architects, said a survey was sent out to the public by multiple methods that resulted in 1,324 responses with 891 online and 433 written. He said the survey indicated indoor activity priorities as indoor walking; group exercise; educational classes; social gathering area; fitness room; aquatics warm water pool; wet arts and crafts; card and board games; health services; dry arts and crafts; physical therapy; aquatic salt water pool; cooking classes; court sports; meals (prepared off-site); billiards; and music practice. He said outdoor activity priorities included outdoor walking; picnic shelter; exercise stations; covered vehicle drop-off; gardening; and scenic view from elevated ground. He said during the last public meeting, covered parking with covered vehicle drop-off/walkway was prominently requested.

Mr. Sempter presented a base building design that focused on phasing for future growth. The base building would consist of 12,700 square feet for a cost of \$5,590,000 and \$800,000 for site preparation costs. A covered drop-off walkway would cost \$380,250 and covered parking would cost \$97,500. He said Phase 2 (wellness pool) would add 5,785 square feet for a cost of \$3,309,500; Phase 3

(arts/crafts/game rooms) would add 3,663 square feet for a cost of \$1,157,500; Phase 4 (cooking/educational class rooms) would add 1,943 square feet for a cost of \$987,000; and Phase 5 (multi-use gym) would add 2,332 square feet for a cost of \$1,653,750.

Mayor Clark asked how confident Staff is that Constitution Street will be realigned and Mr. Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works, said the Jenkins Avenue design contract is on tonight's agenda for approval and in that design contract, Staff will be coordinating with OU on the realignment of Constitution Street.

Councilmember Bierman felt any covered parking should connect to a covered walkway, but said she is underwhelmed with the current proposal. She said if the solution is more money that is what she hopes Council will review, but if the solution is more creative thinking and more discussion then that is what needs to happen.

Ms. Knudsen said the base building is not going to bring in anybody between 60 and 65 years old because there is nothing in the base building that seniors cannot get at any fitness gym or YMCA. She does not see any restrooms or locker rooms in the base building design. She said several of Councilmember Carter's constituents have told her that he stated there is an additional \$3 million available for the Senior Center and asked where that money is coming from and when will it be available. Councilmember Carter said that is not true, he did not say that an additional \$3 million would be available. Councilmember Hall said during the Inspire Health presentations, there was definitely an imagining that if the City of Norman decides to sell the acres of land available at the Porter Campus that money could be used for a Senior Wellness Center. She believes that is where the \$3 million rumor got started.

Ms. Jewell said a card and game room is needed in Phase 1 of the new Senior Center as well as an arts and crafts area and if these will not be available, the seniors might as well stay in the current facility.

Councilmember Holman said the James Garner Avenue Improvements Project could receive federal funding, which could save the City \$3 million in NORMAN FORWARD funds to be used on other NORMAN FORWARD projects.

Dr. Hobson said a pool in Phase 1 would make the new Senior Center more comparable to Oklahoma City's Senior Wellness Center, which is a great facility. Ms. Knudsen agreed and said a warm water pool is really important for seniors because it helps with arthritis issues as well as other medical problems seniors suffer from.

Councilmember Wilson asked if the fitness/weight room could double as a game room for playing cards and board games until that is phased in. She agreed that a warm water pool will make the Senior Center different than any other community facility in Norman.

Councilmember Scott asked how much under budget the Central library came in and Mr. Anthony Francisco, Director of Finance, said approximately \$1.5 under budget, but cautioned Council on using savings on some projects because of the shortfall in NORMAN FORWARD sales tax revenue. He said Council needs to make sure current project budgets are met before adding money to other projects.

Councilmember Petrone asked if it would be cheaper, per square foot, to build all the phases in the beginning and Mr. Semtner said yes, building the entire project at one time would be cheaper. He said there is future cost escalation because construction becomes more expensive every year.

Councilmember Petrone asked if the NF Group has a consensus to wait until funding is available to build all phases in the beginning. Dr. Hobson said the NF Group is very split on this issue because many want to move forward in fear that if the project is delayed for further funding, nothing will be built for many years.

Councilmember Hall said the warm water pool seems to be the element that sets the Senior Center apart from other things offered in Norman. She said, from her discussion with senior citizens, there seems to be an overwhelming consensus that a warm water pool is needed.

Ms. Knudsen said if Phase 1 and Phase 2 could be done at the same time, more seniors would be willing to pay a membership fee to help fund that.

Councilmember Scanlon asked where the outdoor walking trails will be located and Mr. Semtner said the Reaves Park Master Plan has trails throughout the entire park. He said as the building is constructed, FSB Architects will incorporate sidewalks that will tie into those trails.

Councilmember Wilson asked if a full kitchen could be added and Mr. Semptner said Phase 4 includes a catering kitchen, not a commercial kitchen, where large events could be catered. He said the kitchen might have some demonstration type residential appliances, but would not be a commercially viable kitchen. He said the existing Senior Center kitchen facility is willing to transport meals to the new Senior Center.

Councilmember Bierman asked who the current Senior Center kitchen provides meals for and Mr. Foster said it provides meals for seniors in Cleveland County. He said Aging Services prepares approximately 450 meals per day and 30 to 35 of those meals are served at the current Senior Center and the rest are distributed to other locations. He said if Aging Services were to move to the new facility in the future, the City would need to negotiate a new contract with them.

Councilmember Holman said he would like to see a conceptual drawing of the building's orientation in regard to the entire Reaves Park Master Plan. He said senior parking needs to be on the same side of the street as the building, especially if this is the main driveway to the baseball fields.

Ms. Jewell said she is concerned about how the phases will be funded in the future.

Dr. Hobson said the City is looking at apples and oranges when comparing this facility to the wellness facility in Oklahoma City. She thinks people will come to Norman's Senior Center when it is constructed as proposed, but hopes Phase 1 and Phase 2 can be combined in the original construction.

Mayor Clark said there may be AARP grants available for exercise equipment.

Items submitted for the record

1. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "NORMAN FORWARD Update, Indoor Aquatics Facility, Indoor Multi-Sport Facility, Senior Citizen's Center"

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The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Mayor

