

Worksession

Agenda Item #	9
Meeting Date	December 11, 2006
Prepared By	Suzanne Ludlow, Community & Government Liaison
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews, City Manager

Discussion Item	Schedule and Process for Consideration of the Gym Feasibility Study
Background	<p>In August 2006, the City contracted with ANCL Architects of Washington, D.C. to research the feasibility and construction cost of a gymnasium addition to the Takoma Park Community Center. Their detailed report was issued on November 1, 2006. A presentation on the findings of the report was made to Council on December 4, 2006. Several questions about next steps were raised at the December 4 worksession and are to be discussed at the worksession of December 11:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what public process should be pursued? • should the City extend the contract with ANCL Architects to do further investigations at the feasibility study level? <p>What Public Process Should be Pursued?</p> <p>Council has expressed interest in informing Takoma Park residents of the options and possible costs related to the construction of a gymnasium and then receiving their comments on those options and costs.</p> <p><i>Education efforts:</i></p> <p>City staff has distributed free copies of the report to members of the Community Center Liaison Committee, neighbors, and other interested residents. The full report is on the City's web page and is on reserve at the Takoma Park, Md. Library. A staff summary and powerpoint presentation were presented at the Council worksession of December 4 and posted on the web page.</p> <p>Council has expressed interest in having a mailing to all City households explaining the gymnasium options and costs, with information on opportunities for public comment. A similar mailing was done in 2004 regarding the proposal to borrow funds to help pay for the completion of the Community Center. The cost for that mailing was about \$5000, including the cost to translate the information into Spanish. It is estimated that the cost for a new mailing would be less than \$6000.</p> <p><i>Public comment process:</i></p> <p>Council will need to choose a model for public comment. Several options were mentioned at the December 4 worksession, including a public forum (which can include a time in advance of the public comment period in which persons could look over display boards, ask questions, and listen to a presentation) and a charette (where a group of stakeholders brainstorm and imagines possible designs).</p>

	<p>After discussing options with staff, it was suggested that the process used for the Carroll Avenue improvements may work best for this issue. In that process, participants are divided into groups. Each group looks at a big board showing a design option, and a presentation is made about the elements of that option. The group asks questions and makes comments, which are written on an easel sheet. Other comments can be written down on forms and submitted. There may be several City-provided questions asked of the participants about the particular option. After a set period of time, the groups switch off to another of the design options and go through the same process. There would probably be two or three options.</p> <p>This process has the potential to get a lot of specific information about the options, but is not the best process for determining the public's feelings about a tax increase related to pursuing the construction of a gymnasium. That information may best come from a traditional public hearing, as well as surveys or e-mail comment boxes.</p> <p>Because there is no January issue of the City Newsletter, it is recommended that any public comment event occur in February. An early February event would occur before the State Legislature holds public hearings on proposed "bond bills"—the matching grants that help fund many State capital projects.</p> <p>Should the City Extend Its Contract with ANCL Architects? Staff and Council have expressed interest in continuing to work with ANCL Architects on refining some of the gymnasium options and cost estimates. After consulting with the City Attorney's office, it is confirmed that the City Manager could extend the contract to up to 25% of the original contract amount. Since the contract amount was not to exceed \$40,000, an extension not to exceed \$10,000 could be permitted. Hourly rates were included in the contract. The City Manager will consult with the firm and determine whether a flat fee or an hourly rate is most appropriate for the new work to be done.</p>
Policy	Completion of the Takoma Park Community Center and exploration of a gymnasium addition is one of the top five priorities of the Takoma Park City Council for the current year.
Fiscal Impact	Construction of a gymnasium could cost between \$5.5 and \$8.1 million, if construction were able to begin in approximately eighteen months.
Attachments	n/a
Recommendation	Give direction to staff.
Special Consideration	In January, the County Council will be considering a supplemental appropriation of \$360,000 to Takoma Park towards the cost of a gymnasium. A public hearing on that appropriation has been scheduled for December 12, 2006.