

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 6, 2021 Date of Issuance: January 31, 2021

Location: 2000 Denison Avenue

Project: Manhattan Indoor Community Aquatic Center Feasibility Study

Project No.: 21-010

Comments, additions, or corrections to this memo should be communicated to Anderson Knight Architects. If no comments are received, this memo will be interpreted accurate and filed as a part of the permanent record for this project.

Meeting Minutes

1. Introductions were made by Tracy Anderson of Anderson Knight Architects starting at 6:35pm.
 - a. Consultant team: Heather Peterson, AKA, George Deines of Counsilman-Hunsaker; Brian Fuemmeler with McCown Gordan Construction and Jason Hilgers, City of Manhattan
2. Anderson reviewed the agenda for the meeting.
3. Deines reviewed the options from SC #3 meeting.
4. Anderson asked for a motion to approve minutes from SC #3; minutes were unanimously approved.
5. Deines showed additional images of leisure pool examples, reviewed cost recovery options, reviewed expense budget examples for all three pool concepts and reviewed revenue stream examples.
 - a. Deines explained the principle of Revenue Throttle or Dynamic Pricing meaning to adjust admission/rental/use rates up or down to close the gap between the revenue stream and expenses to obtain a cost recovery for the facility of around 50% +/-.
 - b. Deines reviewed the expense budget for each pool size. It was confirmed that the numbers utilized in that budget came from current City staff and were extrapolated based on the water area.
6. Anderson reminded the group that these are concept designs, and that the final design of the Community Aquatic Center would be determined by a future committee/design team.
7. The four sites were reviewed by the design team. GIS was pulled up to show where all 4 sites are located.
 - a. **SC Q:** How were sites selected?
 - b. **A:** The sites that were presented for consideration were selected based on locations where the City of Manhattan already has ownership or existing partnerships with either Riley County or USD 383. Working with property that the City already controls eliminates the unknowns around land acquisition for the purposes of this study. Additional sites could be considered by the City Commission in the future if other site options present themselves at the appropriate time.
8. Anderson reviewed the site options with the steering committee.
 - a. **NE Community Park**
 - i. The pros and cons shown on the slide were discussed and the primary concern was that this site is in an unprotected flood hazard area and that this land was underwater during the 1993 flood. It was agreed that the location does provide ample space to locate the facility with minimal impact on adjacent neighborhoods.

It was also agreed upon that the connection to linear trail was a positive for this location.

- ii. **SC Q:** How could flood risk be mitigated? Much of the park area is in the 100-year flood plain. The steering committee would like additional information regarding the issues that might be encountered by locating the Aquatic Center at this site.
- iii. **A:** The consultant will investigate and come back to the next meeting with additional information.

b. **Griffith Park**

- i. The pros and cons shown on the slide were discussed and the primary concern for this location had to do with the intersection of South Manhattan Avenue and Fort Riley Blvd. There is a lot of heavy vehicle traffic at this intersection. Pedestrians/cyclist from the north side of Ft. Riley Blvd would have to cross Fort Riley Blvd. and pedestrians/cyclist from the south and or coming off Linear Trail would be crossing railroad tracks.
- ii. **SC Q:** Would a large event require additional parking?
- iii. **A:** The building location shown on the site could shift to the east more to accommodate more parking.
- iv. **SC Comment:** South Manhattan Ave. as well as the intersection might need upgrades to make access to the facility safer if it were to be located on this site.
- v. **SC Comment:** If the facility was located here, there would need to be sidewalk improvements on the south side of Ft. Riley Blvd.
- vi. **SC Comment:** The ballfields and open space at Griffith Park are highly utilized throughout the year and it would be a shame to eliminate them.

c. **City Park**

- i. The pros and cons shown on the slide were discussed and in general the steering committee agreed that this is a very accessible site.
- ii. **SC Q:** Would the Aquatic Center located as shown replace the City Park pool?
- iii. **A:** As shown it would be in addition to the exiting City Park pool facility not a replacement.
- iv. **SC Discussion:** The steering committee discussed whether the community would respond favorably to a structure of this size located in City Park since previous committees and studies have rejected the City Park location.
- v. **Comment:** The 2017 Feasibility Study investigated enclosing the 50-meter pool and was ultimately rejected by that steering committee. At the time of that study, it was determined that only enclosing the 50-meter pool would not meet the indoor aquatic needs of the community and that a structure of that size in that location would not be a desirable feature in the park.
- vi. **SC Comment:** The corner location, shown in the images, would help to keep the openness of the park and the architecture of the structure could be done to compliment the park.
- vii. **SC Q:** Is there a benefit to having the Community Indoor Aquatic Center near the existing City Park pool if it were to be located in City Park?
- viii. **A:** (Parks and Rec staff) There is not necessarily an advantage from a Parks and Recreation standpoint to have both pools near each other.

- ix. **Comment:** The location shown would eliminate 'Baker Field'. All the ball fields are named after community members and removing any of them could create community backlash.
- x. **SC Q:** Could the Aquatic Center be reconfigured so as to not impede on the ball field?
- xi. **A:** Possibly, the consultant team will look into it.
- xii. **Comment:** City Park master plan in 2015 also looked at covering pool; the comments were the same as comments from 2017; covering was not supported.
- xiii. **Comment:** There is a future storm sewer project shown in the SE corner of the park. The new aquatics center would need to integrate into the City Park Master Plan. There has been an emphasis on keeping green space in City park.
- xiv. **SC Q:** Could the new aquatic facility go in the northeast part of the park?
- xv. **A:** It would need to work around the Round House which is on the historic registry.
- xvi. **Comment:** It would likely eliminate the entrance at 12 and Fremont and add an entrance at 11th and Osage. The size of the facility would likely have to shrink or eliminate Wilson field.
- xvii. **SC Q:** Could the parking be combined with the ice rink?
- xviii. **Comment:** The design team will look at other locations within City Park to see if there are other viable opportunities that could be incorporated within the current City Park Master Plan.
- xix. **Comment:** The ball fields are full all summer and fall and the green space is used as practice space. The ball field outfield is practice space. If the new facility eliminates green space, then it eliminates practice space. Griffith and Northeast Community Park would also have green practice space taken up by the aquatic facility.
- xx. **Comment:** With the addition of the recreation centers Parks and Recreation are able to utilize more City owned property instead of School Property. They will need to continue to look at sports field utilization in the future and economics of that. With past and future improvement to Anneberg and CiCo what does that mean for the other field utilization. There is a difference between game and practice space.
- xxi. **Comment:** The future use of MHS East Campus is still undecided and it was mentioned that USD 383 might be looking for community input in 2022. The space behind east campus might fit the aquatic facility but parking could be an issue.

d. **CiCo Park**

- i. The pros and cons shown on the slide were discussed and the consensus was that CiCo park would be a viable option and would have minimal, if any, impact on any existing open space, ball fields, etc.
- ii. **SC Comment:** If Manhattan is looking to build an aquatics center to draw a lot of community events and envisioning the aquatic center in the future, it seems that CiCo would make a good place for the facility. If the facility gets squeezed somewhere in town it might limit future growth of the facility.
- iii. **SC Comment:** Locating it in CiCo does not take away ball fields, like it does at the other sites. The aquatic facility would seem to compliment the amenities at CiCo park better than the other sites. At the other sites it either competes with the existing amenities or it would be out of scale.

- iv. Comment: Regarding the current outdoor pools, further investigation would need to be done on deciding whether to keep or eliminate all or parts of the existing outdoor pool.
- v. SC Comment: It would be good if it makes sense to keep some of the outdoor pool components to compliment the indoor facility. Since there is already a pool at that location there is community approval for a facility at CiCo Park. Depending on what portions of the existing pools could be kept consideration would need to be given to the existing infrastructure. Is there any that could be re-used/kept? If there were elements kept, future committees would need to understand where the budget is coming from for the outdoor maintenance.
- vi. SC Comment: Can the community agree to have 4 pools when it's been a challenge to keep 2 of the 3 open? Is there sentiment to overcome? There is much gossip on why the pools have been closed. The City needs to provide information to the community on why they haven't been open. It could be politically challenging to close a pool when money has been spent on it somewhat recently.
- vii. SC Comment: The aquatic center is a basic **necessity** for quality of life. It allows the community to teach kids water safety, provide health benefits and different water sports. The aquatic facility should be seen more as a basic need like sewer or water and not an amenity to Manhattan.
- viii. Comment: When talking about staffing, maintenance, etc. for indoor vs outdoor pools it is like comparing apples and oranges because the facility is always open. Staff does not have to deal with opening and closing and it can be difficult to staff for 2-3 months and could be easier to hire for all year.
- ix. Comment: The committee needs to remember that this is a **Community Aquatic Facility**. (not just a pool). It will be important to have all the correct information out there so the community can decide how to move forward with the proposal.
- x. City Staff Comment: CiCo pool was not open because there was not enough staff and to help with reducing expenses during the pandemic. The City had to look at what the available resources and capabilities were and adjust accordingly. They did not want to create unsafe conditions by not having enough staff and making sure they were being fiscally responsible.
- xi. Comment: CiCo park outdoor pool had evolved into pool that catered to a different population with the last renovations. It became more of a family pool. Attendance went down after City and NV pools were opened. CiCo became the quieter pool. The aquatic center would compliment the outdoor facility.
- xii. Comment: The committee needs to tell the story of who the aquatic center is for. Everyone needs to be made aware of all the stakeholders that were interviewed so everyone can find a place for them. There were many different perspectives that were invited to the table to share their thoughts.
- xiii. SC Q: It would be good to show a diagram of a community our size and how much outdoor water we have. Is it better to have one large pool instead of multiple? What is the right size?
- xiv. SC Q: How much shelf life is left in the original 6 lane CiCo pool? How much is left in kiddy pool?

- xv. Comment: The consultant team will work in more detail to show how the aquatic facility can be used throughout the day by many different stakeholders. This would help show the depth of how many different stakeholders it could serve in the community.
- xvi. Comment: A larger facility could accommodate multiple users at one time. All of the schools could utilize the facility, not just the high school. It would allow for the high school students to be certified in different water safety areas and the elementary students to receive water safety courses at part of their PE curriculum.
- xvii. Comment: The accessibility to CiCo is good as it is close to trails, sidewalks, and bike paths.

9. Public Comment Period:

- a. Vincent Tracy has lived in Manhattan since 1983'. He believes the Manhattan community will want an aquatic facility, but a sticking point will be location. There are many elderly people that utilize ATA so drive times (presented) are not accurate. However, all of the sites are near/on a bus route. It seems as though when new facilities come up they go in City or CiCo. In his mind the best places would be Northeast Community Park or CiCo Park. Griffith park does not seem like a great spot. He agrees that we shouldn't remove ball parks. Griffith has the old stone wall. He does not believe that visibility is as important. The Douglas center pool was removed and never replaced. Residents had to walk further or take ATA to another pool. MCM has heavy trucks and trash trucks that travel near Griffith Park which would add to the safety concern of that site. You cannot remove the ball fields at City Park and you would be trying to shoe horn in a new facility. City Park is no longer in central Manhattan because Manhattan has grown. Northeast Community Park is in a flood plain. Water has been in the park because of Blue river path way. The river bed changed but the channels were never closed off. If the facility went in Northeast Community Park the intersection of Casement and Allen would need to be upgrade. The Parks and Recreation department would be close to the Park. The site is not far from Tuttle Creek Blvd and signage could be used to direct people to the site. The facility is not just for Manhattan but also visitors. He would request that plans stop getting put on a shelf. It will be difficult to convince the Community and the City Commission that this is something that needs to be done and is best for continued growth of Manhattan. The facility could have a green roof to help in reducing green space.
 - i. SC Q: What is personal interest in the facility?
 - ii. Tracy A: He was not selected for the SC. He lives in the Northview area and would be interested in having the facility in that area. He also notices that many people in that area are elderly and locating the facility in Northeast Community Park would make it easier for them to get there. He is concerned about his neighbors and them having access to an aquatic center.
- b. Rachel Levin and Maria Snyder spoke on behalf of the Flint Hills Human Rights Group and Little Apple Pride. LGTBQ people are more likely to live in poverty and thus have limited access to health opportunities. Public transportation can be a life safety issue with the LGTBQ community. It needs to be looked at how people can get to the site and get there safely. LGTBQ people are the most impacted by hate crimes. In public spaces they can be turned away or denied access because of how they identify. Manhattan does have a non-discrimination policy. The building needs to be gender neutral/accessible to the LGTBQ

community. Bathrooms are the biggest issue for the LGTBQ community. Many people limit their water intake to avoid bathrooms. Transgender kids should be able to safely feel comfortable utilizing the facility. Many kids will drop out of activities because they do not feel safe participating. The facility should provide gender neutral bathrooms and locker rooms. Kansas statistics are worse than national averages.

- i. SC Comments: All along we have talked about inclusion and accessibility by ALL. We are fighting the same fight and inclusion is desired by the SC. Documents have been provided by Rachel and will be included in the final document.
- ii. SC Q: What are the ways to solve safety issues?
- iii. Levin A: Having individual changing stalls. Communal and open areas allow for more observation and increases safety. It provides witnesses and intervention if a hate crime would happen. It also seems to help with cleaner bathrooms, reduces lines and helps families. It benefits many in the community not just the LGTBQ community.

10. Funding: Jason Hilgers spoke about funding options:

- a. The desired concepts would cost an estimated 20-34 Million.
- b. The facility could be paid for with a bond issue supported by either property taxes or a sales tax. It would have to be voted on. 1 mill captures approximately 600K in property taxes per year. Every .1% of a sales tax rate can generate \$1.1M in revenue. Typically, debt is financed for about 10 years. On 34M it would end up being about 50M with debt service – or \$5 million a year for 10 years. It would take about 8mills annually to fund the 50M in total debt service. A .5% sales tax would also generate roughly \$5M a year. USD 383 has roughly 6 mills dedicated to their recent \$130M bond issue. The taxing jurisdiction for USD cover more area than just the City of Manhattan. Their district extends beyond the City limits. The City would only be able to capture property tax within the City limits if a mill levy question was pursued.
- c. If you utilized Sales Tax: The tax rate is currently at 8.95% The City gets 1.45%. Currently the Quality of Life .25% sales tax captures about 2.75-2.8M per year. That is what has funded the recreation centers, trail projects, and will fund the improvements to Cico. Those projects were ‘pay as you go’ so there was not a debt service to be paid. To fund the aquatic center it would require a half cent or 0.5% sales tax which would generate about 50M over 10 years.
- d. Sales tax may be easier than property tax to pass. The Schools can only leverage property tax and not sales tax, so they have to increase mill levy to increase funding. The City can utilize either option, however they both would have to be voted on and a majority vote or over 50% would be required to secure the funding.
- e. The timing of a vote would be important based on voter turnout. The local elections occur every other year, Governor every 4, and President every 4. Turnouts vary greatly pending on the election. How much money is needed and what year a vote will occur will make an impact. The selected site will be a factor. When looking at who votes in Manhattan and if they find the location preferable will make a difference. Typically, the west side of Manhattan has a larger turnout of voters for local elections.
- f. There are many different ways the vote/site/funding could be looked at.
- g. The City staff will provide different options for the Steering Committee and ultimately the Commission.

- h. Q: Could any Economic Development funds be used? A: There is a tax that will replace the Quality of Life tax in 2023 and will last for 10 years. Of the funds generated 70% is for existing debt or new future improvements. 20% goes to the Chamber for Economic Development and 10% will go to workforce housing. Q: What is the definition of Economic Development? A: There is a debate on what it will or won't cover.
 - i. Since the Steering Committee has spoken about this being a regional facility could it be funded County wide or Regionally? City of Manhattan is part of Riley County and Pottawatomie County. When the County adds to the mill levy more property taxes are generated since there are more households/property. It may be hard to gain consensus with multiple governmental entities.
 - j. Q: Could a sales tax AND mil levy be utilized? A: There would need to be careful education of the public. It is likely this project would require a vote. There are circumstances where the Commission could authorize the construction within an existing park, but not sure the Commission would take that action without the vote of the people for this particular project.
 - k. A key item will be to figure out if there is community support and how will the funding work for the initial construction and on-going operations. The on-going operations will be a sticking point. Currently it costs the City about 1M for all 3 pools for 90 days to operate them. They generate about 500K in revenue per year.
 - l. Q: Could there be another sales tax that needs to be added that goes directly to Parks and Recreation? A: This could be explored. There is a lot of pressure for funding across the organization and community.
 - m. Q: Can a City take a private donation? A: Yes. The Discovery Center has naming rights and would set a precedence; the City can accept private donations.
 - n. Q: Where does the 500K come from to subsidize the current City pools? A: It comes from some of the other 85 other revenue streams the City has – property tax and sales tax are the largest two sources.
 - o. Q: Could this facility be promoted like a public service just like the Police, Fire Department, etc. is? A: The Commission may approve the question being added to the ballot, but this boils down to voters approving it. It seems to be best to have more people vote. The real challenge is acquiring that vote of over 50% by the public/voters.
 - p. Q: At what point can some of the Steering Committee meet as a group outside of these meetings? A: They would need to wait until after the Steering Committee meetings are done and the Commission has 'released' them from their duties. The current group is an appointed group, so if they have a quorum then the meeting has to be open to the public. Once the commission 'releases' the group from their duties, then they can meet because the Steering Committee would be dissolved.
 - q. The quarter cent (.25%) sales tax expires in 2027. At that time it could be voted on to be renewed and dedicated to the indoor aquatic facility.
 - r. A key point is not only covering construction costs but being able to cover as many daily expenses as possible, knowing you won't be able to cover all of your costs. There will be pressure from the community to keep entry costs low. There is a balance of charging too much to cover expenses but being so expensive people don't come vs keeping the cost low so more people come.
11. Anderson recapped to ensure we have met the objectives of the steering committee.

- a. Discussion: The SC felt like all objectives were met except for the site preference. They noted options had been reviewed but did not feel like they could make a recommendation to the Commission. A **Motion was made to hold another meeting. The date for the future meeting will be sent out when it is established. Additional clarification will be made based off the discussions from tonight.**
 - b. Discussion: There will be funding options developed by City staff working with the design team and they will be presented to the Commission for consideration.
 - c. Discussion: The next steps would be similar to how the Recreation Centers were designed. This SC will make a recommendation to the Commission, who will decide how to move forward. A second SC will be created to provide design details for the Aquatic Facility.
 - d. Comment: The SC needs to decide a funding approach and a site preference. Those need to be supported by the group. The Commission will be looking for advice on how to fund the new facility. If it needs to go to a vote, consideration should be given to which year and election cycle based off how many people typically make it out to vote. The next big elections are in 2022 with the Governor and 2024 with the President. In 2027 the current quality of life sales tax will be coming off.
12. Closing thoughts:
- a. Discussion: Generally, the SC likes CiCo but would need to understand existing facility and new facility budgeting and a funding source.
 - b. SC Q: What is the cost development of each site?
 - c. A: The design team will gather information on this and report back at the next meeting.
 - d. Discussion: The group thought it would be safe to eliminate Griffith Park because of the lack of accessibility by foot traffic, how much green space it would remove and the elimination of the ball parks.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm

END OF MINUTES