

Youth Center Meeting
Monday, September 23, 2017
Evansville Youth Center
209 S. First St, Evansville, WI

Mr. Brooks, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:57 pm

Members in Attendance: Mr. Brooks, Mayor Hurlley, Mr. Roth, Ms. Swanson, Ms. Bartlett and Ms. Dobbs.

Ms. Bartlett reviewed the history of the youth center. Originally, it was a grocery store, then a carpet store, ceramic shop, and now it is The Youth Center. AWARE's office is on south side and The Youth Center is on north side. Ms. Bartlett took the committee on a tour of the center. The tour revealed water issues, a choppy floor plan due to additions and renovations over the years and a common theme of a lack of space.

Ms. Bartlett works with the kids to make a daily snack and the kitchen configuration is not compatible with the number of kids in attendance daily.

Committee members reviewed their assumptions. Mr. Brooks indicated that we are all working towards the same goal, a new Youth Center. The City has committed to the Third Street project. However this discussion goes, it could affect the amount of completion of Third Street. We need to work towards finding a location. This will affect what the city can put towards The Youth Center and other projects. Ms. Dobbs stated, "We are all here for kids. Space is a concern – here and at the middle school. It will be good to get together to weigh pros and cons to see what options are available. Mr. Brooks stated that he sees The Youth Center as a resource for the schools. He hopes the school sees The Youth Center as a resource as well and we can work together.

The Committee discussed the age ranges that the center currently serves. Ms. Dobbs interviewed a few students that attend the center and they feel that the current programming would best suit 4th-6th Graders. Ms. Swanson asked if we could build a Rec Center for all ages. High school students do not necessarily have things to do after school and this could be an excellent resource for them. Mr. Brooks indicated that City Council and The Youth Center Board have not talked about changing the focus of the center. The bylaws would have to change in order to change the age groups.

Staffing is an issue. Ms. Bartlett is a 50% employee and the other staff member works even less hours.

The Vision of the future Youth Center was discussed. Mr. Brooks would like to have an office space for AWARE and BASE. Church Youth Groups, Boy Scouts and the Library occasionally uses the Youth Center for gatherings so a large gathering area would be nice. Ms. Bartlett would also like to see a window facing the playground at the Middle School so kids could be supervised while staff is inside as well as a large multi-purpose room that could serve as a gym where kids could play basketball or bring in a Pilates or martial arts teacher for classes. The group also discussed offering summer programming for older kids and possibly splitting up ½ days and have Middle School kids in the morning and High School Kids in the

afternoon. The building would need to be utilized for more things than it is currently and the center could grow if they could expand the programming age range.

Mr. Roth expressed that he feels the community should be surveyed on what they would like to see for the future of The Youth Center. Ms. Dobbs asked what the location options are for the new center. Ms. Bartlett expressed that she feels that it needs to be close to the Middle School. Mr. Roth stated that the programming needs to be determined first, the age range needs to be defined. The location comes second; options need to be brought to the table. Then the building comes last, what spaces are needed for the new center. The community needs to weigh in on those items. Age range needs to be defined, what programs they need, and then talk about the spaces they need.

Mr. Brooks asked Mr. Sargent, Community Development Director, what this property would be used for if it was vacated. Mr. Sargent responded via email: "Mitigation would be required. It was built as non-conforming. Demolition would have an adverse impact on the historical district. Any exterior changes in the building's form or mass would need to be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission is obligated to mitigate any adverse impacts on a property or district. Demolishing or replacing the existing Youth Center would meet the definition of an adverse impact. Therefore, the commission would seek mitigation from an applicant that can include reconstructing a building on site. "

Mr. Roth and Mayor Hurtley will not attend these committee meetings going forward. They trust the committee to do what is in the best interest of the community.

Mayor Hurtley indicated that if the School District would give the city a lot, then they would not have the added cost of purchasing a lot and possible demolition costs. If the school does not give a lot, will the district put any money towards this new Youth Center?

At the next meeting, the committee will bring forward site options, realistic locations that both support a place for youth and doing the right thing for the community within the constraints that we have. This is a work in progress. The committee will also discuss gauging community support.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 21, 2019 at 6pm. Location TBD.

Meeting adjourned at 6:56pm

Jim Brooks, Chair

Approved: 10/21/2019