

From: Lance Griggs [mailto:griggs1@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2011 12:14 PM
To: Alanis, Susan
Cc: Libby Willis
Subject: PUblic/Private Partnerships

Susan,

Libby Willis suggested I pass the attached information to you about a public/private partnership we experienced in our area. I hope this aids your committee in their deliberations on this issue.

Many of the neighborhood associations in our area are not pleased with our experience. While the attachments document our position, I would like to offer some additional comments as to why public/private partnerships should be entered into only if specific criteria are met. We feel that the Northpark YMCA is a perfect example of one that did not meet the purpose intended by the taxpayers of Fort Worth .

First, let me say I have nothing against the YMCA. They are an excellent organization. However, they are not a community center. Our problem with this YMCA is that it replaced an intended community center without meeting the needs or serving the intended purpose. I would also like to add that we are not in principle opposed to public/private partnerships as long as they serve their

intended purpose while saving taxpayer dollars. *The key here is serving their intended purpose.*

The Community Center, preliminarily named the Summerglen Community Center in the bond documents, was included in the 2004 CIP Bond Package as a direct result of actions by the Summerfields Neighborhood Association. Our association felt a community center was needed for our area because: (1) We are an aging neighborhood in far north Fort Worth that has a high population of both seniors and working families with many latch-key youth; (2) We have no facilities for these seniors and young people; (3) We have a high incidence of juvenile crime, especially car burglaries and thefts; and (4) It was felt that a community center would offer a viable alternative to these young people. The Northpark YMCA addresses none of these problems.

As a little background, a YMCA located at Basswood Blvd. near Park Vista already existed in the area. That location is actually much closer to the targeted neighborhood than the new location. The YMCA was already planning to build a new facility in the area because they felt their existing one was too small. They approached the City about the partnership. At about the same time the City also decided to put the Community Center in North Park, a city park located on North Beach at Shiver Road . This location is over two miles north of the intended target neighborhood. By moving the community center to this location, it placed

our association outside of the boundary for meeting notifications. As a result, we were never notified of any of the meetings and the partnership was an accomplished fact before we became aware of the situation.

As a result a very nice YMCA was constructed in North Park . The City contributed the \$2.5M from the bond package toward it ' s construction. It is a YMCA, it is run like a YMCA, it has the same fee structure as a YMCA, and even though it is called a community center it does not provide the same services as a community center. It offers no programs beyond that of any other YMCA.

As a result we have a "community center" in name only. It is simply one of several fitness facilities already in the area. Its fee structure, even with the YMCA ' s scholarship program, is still much higher than a community center and is actually higher than some of the commercial fitness centers with which it competes. It offers none of the youth and senior programs one expects from a community center. Even if the fee situation could be overcome, it is located so far from the originally targeted neighborhood that the young people who really need it cannot get to it. The YMCA ' s old facility was much closer. The only advantages I can see to the City is: (1) In 20 years they will have a nice building; and (2) It saved them about \$300,000 a year in operating expenses. This area already had a YMCA, and as a result we now have a larger YMCA (which would have been in the area without city participation) and no community center for our at risk

young people. For this we spent \$2.5M in taxpayer money.

Because of our experience, we have two concerns we believe should be addressed when such partnerships are considered:

1. Does the partnership serve the intended purpose?

2. If it serves the intended purpose, are their adequate savings to justify the partnership?

Saving money alone should not be the determining factor!

I hope this input helps during the committee 's considerations. If I can be of assistance, please let me know.

Thank you,

Lance Griggs, President

Summerfields Neighborhood Association

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